# THE Public Interest

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**Educational Dilemmas**

*George C. Keller* • *James S. Coleman*
*John William Ward*

*James Tobin* . . . . The Case for an Income Guarantee
*Alvin L. Schorr* . . Selfish Children and Lonely Parents
*Daniel J. Elazar* . . . . . Are We a Nation of Cities?
*Charles E. Lindblom* . . The Rediscovery of the Market
*Virginia Held* . . . . . PPBS Comes to Washington
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*Irving Kristol* . . . . . New Right, New Left

**The New Society-III**

*Peter F. Drucker* . . . . . Notes on the New Politics

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# New left, new right

IRVING KRISTOL

An old friend, who lives in California and is active in the Democratic party there, visited New York recently. We spent a lot of time together, and I found him to be in troubled spirits. California politics, he confessed, was beginning to slip beyond his comprehension. First, there had been the whole Berkeley business – and while specifically campus turmoil seems to have subsided, at least temporarily, it is also true that the "New Left", using Berkeley as a base, was now trying to move into the Democratic party in a significant way. Then there was the victory of Ronald Reagan in the Republican primary, and the discovery of the pollsters that he seemed to have an excellent chance against Governor Brown in November. This was a particular shock, since the Democrats had always felt – and earlier polls appeared to have confirmed their sentiments – that Reagan, as an "extremist," would have the least chance of election among potential Republican candidates. My friend didn't understand what precisely was bugging the militants of the New Left or why the citizens of California should show so keen an interest in Ronald Reagan. Neither this New Left nor this New Right seemed to have anything like a coherent program. Governor Brown's moderately liberal administration ought, by all rational analysis, to have been perfectly in tune with the consensus of political opinion in that prosperous and progressive state. Yet things weren't working out as one might have expected.

One has the suspicion that, in this respect as in others, California may be the pacesetter for the nation. As Peter Drucker points out in an article elsewhere in this issue, the politics of consensus, so ingeniously engineered by Lyndon Johnson, is essentially a politics of transition from an older "interest group" conception of political behavior – in which so-called "gut issues" and "bread-and-butter" issues predominate – to one in which the issues are less tangible, less meas-

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urable, less amenable to the arithmetic of compromise. The tantalizing question is just what shape these new issues will take, and in what directions they will lead us.

Not that "gut issues" are likely to disappear. People always have taken, and always will take, the liveliest interest in obtaining their "fair" share of the nation's income and wealth. It is even possible that, with increasing affluence, there will be increasingly bitter argument over who gets what, when, and how. Given more to quarrel about, men are not likely to quarrel less: there is no sign that our industrial relations are sinking into apathy under the soothing pressure of accumulated fringe benefits. But what does seem to be evident is that this kind of class struggle – and it is unquestionably a class struggle, though merely over money, not power – is not going to serve as a focus for American politics. True, there are some in the New Left and the New Right who *think* it will, and talk as if it will – one still hears angry mutterings about "exploitation" and "socialism" from the two sides, as they contemplate the inevitably sordid business of parcelling out the nation's bounty. But this only proves what one would expect: that not everything is new on the New Left and Right. After all, walking backwards into the future has always been the most common form of political locomotion.

But what *will* be new about the "new politics"? As Mr. Drucker suggests, it is probable that foreign policy will play a more central and controversial role than ever before; the New Left gives more than a little evidence to support that proposition. It is also probable that the tensions involved in integrating the Negro into American society will give rise to significant electoral issues; there can be little doubt that at least some of Mr. Reagan's support comes from those who, while not racist in any traditional sense, are nevertheless fed up with the difficulties of coping with this historic and seemingly intractable problem. But beyond and beneath such specific urgencies, there appears to be a general and diffuse uneasiness, all the more powerful, and all the more dangerous, for being so stammeringly inarticulate. This uneasiness reveals itself in the astonishing frequency with which one phrase above all turns up in our current political rhetoric. The New Left uses it; the New Right uses it; President Johnson uses it; *everyone* uses it – though no one seems to know quite what it means. That phrase is: "the quality of American life."

At its most trivial – and the Administration is most especially tempted toward this interpretation – the phrase is taken to mean that the people of the United States should be enjoying more and better symphony orchestras, more and better art museums, more and better repertory theaters. The only thing to be said in favor of this meaning is that there is no conceivable harm in our acquiring all these cultural benefits. Against it, one can say that it is vulgarly simple-minded, and therefore ultimately misleading. People are not set into political motion by such matters; and the truly interesting fact about this new anxiety over "the quality of American life" is that it has so much *political* energy.

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At its most portentous – and both the New Left and New Right have a high quotient of portentousness – the phrase is given an apocalyptic significance (and the convenient aspect of apocalyptic thinking is that it never gets bad marks for being vague and imprecise). For the New Left, the "quality of American life" is being strained by the massive organized complexity of our society, in which the individual becomes an anonymous unit and in which his personal authenticity, his singular "existential" dimension, is accorded no official recognition. The New Right, oddly enough, makes its complaint in not too dissimilar terms: the self-reliant individual is losing control over his own destiny, and over the destiny of his children too. A keen sense of personal impotence, an acute sense of personal frustration, is the watermark beneath the manifestoes of both Left and Right. Both feel that "things are in the saddle," that American life is something they cannot get a friendly grip on, that whatever is happening, it is happening *to* them, that they are the objects, not the subjects, of contemporary history. Were the word not so fashionable as to be a bore, one could say that it is "alienation" that is most distinctive of the "new politics."

Now, it is easy to poke gentle or cruel fun at the fuzzy misconceptions about the actualities of American life, and the romantic notions about America's past or possible future, that characterize the lamentations now rising to the political heavens. One can, for instance, point out that these same people who find America so inhospitable are, in material terms, making out very well thank you, and much, much better than ever before. One can also legitimately assert – and Alvin Schorr's article, in this issue, does this splendidly – that the facts of American life, past and present, bear little or no correspondence to the popular image of them. One can impatiently demand, what has been notably lacking: specific proposals for the reform and improvement of whatever it is that is bothersome. One can, and I think one should, do all of these things. But I think it would be a grave error to do *only* these things. It is the part of prudent statesmanship to affirm that no real discontent can be reduced to imaginary causes. On this, as on so many political matters, Edmund Burke said the wisest word:

> To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past, to conceive extravagant hopes of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind . . . Such complaints and humors have existed in all times; yet as all times have not been alike, true political sagacity manifests itself in distinguishing that complaint which only characterizes the general infirmity of human nature, from those which are symptoms of the particular distemperature of our own air and season.

As to the causes of "the particular distemperature of our own air and season," I am both too modest and too ignorant to offer a ready and

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forceful explanation. But I should like to hazard a weak guess of a general nature in the hope that others will be provoked into stronger and more cogent analysis.

It seems to me that America is experiencing what can only be called, even after all discounting of the melodramatic glibness of the phrase, a "crisis in values." The crisis — which is, of course, to be observed in many other Western nations as well — is twofold. First, a great many areas of human life and behavior, whose governance falls under the rule of custom, tradition, and conventional belief, have become affected with vast and unwelcome uncertainty. This is not a recent development; it has been observed, experienced, and commented upon for more than a century now, and is everywhere accepted as a distinguishing feature of "the modern era." But it is only relatively recently that the mass of the people have become directly and personally involved in it. Habits of thought and action persist long after they have been intellectually and morally undermined. Today, the shock waves are beginning to upset and challenge the most ordinary decencies and civilities. People do not know what they ought to think about relations between the sexes, about relations between parents and children, about relations between the citizen and his government. For some individuals, this uncertainty is seen as a creative opportunity — the old ways have decayed and new, more suitable ones are in the process of being contrived. Perhaps it is so. But the fact remains that ordinary people — by which I mean most of us — find this state of affairs almost intolerably exacerbating. It is easy to snicker, as popular humor now does, at the typical father trying, and hopelessly failing, to give guidance to his daughter about the regulation of her sexual life. Yet this father, even though he may join the snickering at himself, is all too likely to feel deep down that he has been unmanned by some kind of nebulous conspiracy, and that older certainties are to be preferred to a newer sophistication that is primarily destructive. I suspect that a great many such fathers in California find Ronald Reagan's rhetorical emphasis on the traditional virtues quite appealing — it is, in its own oblique way, a "gut issue." As for the youngsters, the evidence of Berkeley would seem to indicate that, whatever benefits the new freedoms might confer, contentment is not one of them.

But in addition to this personal crisis in values, there is an institutional one. Not only do people not quite know what to believe about private and public proprieties; they don't know where to turn for answers they could accept as authoritative, in however mild and attenuated a form. The value-creating and value-sustaining institutions in American life have traditionally been the family, the church, and the school. Events of the past decades have deprived these institutions of their authority over morals (and even over manners) — without, however, providing alternative authorities. The mass media by their very nature can only mimic the existing confusion. The universities might logically be considered as new centers of moral and spiritual authority, and perhaps they will eventually become such.

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At the moment, however, they are themselves probably the most crisis-ridden institutions in the nation, and are having the greatest difficulty defining their own reason for being.

Where does that leave us? With a great many questions and no answers? Not quite. For if there are no answers, properly speaking, there are nevertheless things to be said. I would myself venture to say two things, the first of which I am ready to be dogmatic about, the second of which I concede to be speculative.

First, on all the evidence, *the one worst way to cope with this crisis in values is through organized political-ideological action.* Most of the hysteria, much of the stupidity, and a good part of the bestiality of the twentieth century have arisen from efforts to do precisely this. Not only do such efforts fail; they fail in the costliest fashion. And if modern history can be said to teach anything, it is that, intolerable as the crisis in values may be, it invariably turns out to be far less intolerable than any kind of "final solution" imposed by direct political action.

Secondly – *and nevertheless* – there is no way of removing this issue from politics. A great many people would like to think that the New Left and the New Right are passing eddies on the mainstream of American politics, and that after a while we shall all happily return to politics-as-usual, bickering amicably over who gets what, when, and how. I do not believe this will happen. And I am not even sure that I would like to see it happen. Though I approve, on the whole, of the various programs for a Great Society, I too am full of doubt about their potentialities for a good life in a good society. There are a great many things wrong with the way we live now, and I have little faith that they will automatically right themselves. Above all, I cannot persuade myself that a democracy whose notions of public and private virtue are slowly being emptied of their substance can sustain itself. Democracy, after all, means self-government; and such self-government is, in the long run, utterly impossible without adequate self-definition, self-certainty, self-control. All of modern life and modern culture have combined to make the self a question to itself. I regard it as utopian to expect that people will not turn to politics for answers. And I regard it as certain that they will take vicious answers rather than none at all.

Is this not playing with fire? Of course it is. But that, I do think, is what "the great game of politics" is going to be like, in the period ahead of us. It will be anything but amusing; indeed, it could well be the most dangerous game of all.

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# On selfish children and lonely parents

ALVIN L. SCHORR

*The American family is deteriorating. We were once a family-centered society, but industrialization and urbanization have separated our old people from their children, and everyone from his ancestral home. Women have made great strides towards equality – they are paid in cash for their work and assume new status in their marriages – but this leaves men and women uncertain about sexual roles. Our society is also a highly stimulating one; youngsters reach puberty earlier and undertake sexual relations and marriage before they are ready. As we know, the age of permissiveness was ushered in by Freud; we pay for its glories with character disorders in adults and – who knows? – delinquency among youth. (Dr. Spock rewrites* Baby Care *so that those who always resisted permissiveness are paid the final insult of being permitted to be strict.) Our civilization has become so complex that each of us feels adrift, uncertain of our purposes, unable even to attain genuine intimacy with our kin. If an American can survive the driving thirties, the dangerous forties, and the frantic fifties, he may live to a ripe old age. And what awaits him? His children – anxious, ambitious, and self-regarding – will have neither time nor material support to offer.*

This description is only slightly caricatured; with small changes, it would make an ordinary, sober beginning of a speech or paper.

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As a summary of the trend of events it serves several uses. First, everyone copes with change and is, at least at times, weary of it and worried about it: the proposed summary may provide a momentary sense of individual comfort by suggesting a community of discomfort. Second, beneath the gloss of objectivity and accuracy there are, indeed, facts. That they are put together in a totally misleading fashion is not readily apparent to men who look out, after all, from the window of only one lifetime. Third, for those who are activist, this description of what has been happening may seem to locate the enemy; one has only to bring these changes to a halt, and get on with the job of restoring "the American way of life," in which the loving family figures so prominently.

The fact remains, however, that – whether used for ulterior purposes or not – the complaints are usually in themselves deceptive. (In sophisticated hands, they are not wrong in detail so much as in the context into which the details are fitted.) No better illustration can be found than in the question of the relationship of adult children to their parents. I have touched on the complaint: children do not take care of their parents and do not feel concerned about them as they used to; old people live isolated and lonely last years, while their children are absorbed in themselves and in their own children. Is this true? False? Or is it both true and false in such a way as to be misleading?

THE greatest change that has occurred in relation to aging is that so many people now live to be old. (I shall spare you the statistics that go with this observation.) It must be apparent that a doubling or tripling of the aged population in itself creates a problem of financial support, even if nothing else in the family relationship changes. For that reason and others, we have in the last thirty years built an extensive system of social security. The system itself has encouraged old people to live (a) separately as long as they can, and (b) without help from others when possible. Both of these consequences may be of debatable merit – we shall return to them – but the major cause is a longer life span. Presumably, no one suggests that this is in itself a change for the worse.

This change has been going on for the last century or more. In this time, too, we have steadily shifted from a property-centered to a wage-centered economy. With income now based on selling a marketable skill, a problem arises as soon as a person cannot work. When the handicraft tools or the farm were owned by the parent, he had an income, willy-nilly, whoever did the work. He had an income because he owned and controlled the means of production. If the young adult left home and parents, he left behind the means for earning a living, and had to develop new means for himself. It was

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both more difficult for him to leave than it is today, and it was less of a blow to his parents.

Aside from parental ownership, the pre-industrial economy tended in other ways to assure income to parents, without it appearing – or even without anyone feeling – that moral choice was involved. Income was chiefly in agricultural products the whole family used; it was shared by all people in the home, as a matter of course. The availability of free land also supported parental control over their own property; it was not necessary to divide the homestead for the children. Above all, and most simply, one recurs to the fact that there were not many retired people to need help: as late as 1900, average life expectancy was 47 years.

The increase in life expectancy and the spread of individually-earned cash income has produced a new problem of support. But what may *not* be said is that the adult child once supported his father because he cared for him, and that today he does neither. It is more exact to say that it was, a good many years ago, possible for old people *to command* support – because those of them who survived controlled the means of support. If feelings or morality have had much to do with the change, the evidence has yet to be presented.

Another change, considerably related to the shift to individually-earned money wages, is the ascendancy of the nuclear family. The nuclear family – a man, his wife, and their dependent children – pre-dates the nuclear age, and is said to be a consequence of industrialization. It is sometimes said that the larger families, including several generations and several degrees of relationship, became obsolete with the agricultural society to which they were suited. One must be wary of reading this kind of direct purpose into our preference for nuclear families; but it is clear that small, mobile families work well in an industrial society. Now, the argument goes, since grandfather and grandmother are no longer part of their children's family, they are forgotten, frequently lonesome, and in any case not supported.

This particular argument is not in accord with the facts. So much is true: adult children in the United States do not habitually make cash contributions to their parents. Perhaps 5 percent – in any case not more than 10 percent – of the aged get cash contributions in any given year from children with whom they do not live. *Indeed, money is more likely to flow in the opposite direction.* Middle-aged parents are accustomed to giving money to their children; this attitude continues into their old age. An American parent is usually ambitious for his children and grandchildren, as they are for themselves. He helps them if he can. He is reluctant to take money if he feels it interferes with meeting their own needs. (And where is the family that feels it has enough money to meet its own needs?)

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It is accurate, then, to say that grown children today do not usually contribute cash to their parents; but that does not mean that old people go without help. For obvious reasons, old people who need help are likely to find themselves turning to children who haven't much money themselves. (A recent study of public assistance families in the Philadelphia area found that more of them were giving help to relatives than getting it!) The preferred method of "helping" that poor families use is to share living quarters. Such sharing represents the most efficient use of money. It provides the old person with natural ways of reciprocating – baby-sitting, helping with housework – that are important to him. Also, the old person is frequently in need of nursing care or of benevolent supervision – sharing homes with children is more common with advancing age and ill health.

If the giving of cash is not a common pattern, living together is quite common. *Of the old people who have living children, over a third live with one child or another.* (Helping the old person is only one reason for living together. Sometimes the old person is helping his son or daughter; other families live together simply because they always have.) *There are more old people living with their children today than the total number of old people who were alive forty years ago.* This is something of a blow to the theory that the nuclear family spins off its aging parents, careless of love and heedless of responsibility. It may only be said that children break away from their parents in order to form their own family unit. It may not be said that, with the parents old or sick, the nuclear family ignores and excludes the aged parent.

Apart from the material facts of money and living arrangements, it is important to attend to the feeling between parents and their children. Everyone knows some old person who is lonely and uncared for. Isolated old people have been thought to be numerous, perhaps because they are naturally concentrated among the clients of public assistance officials and social welfare agencies. But there is a growing body of evidence that such old people, although obviously they exist, are not typical. For example, surveys show that *only 15 percent of aged parents live further than a short ride from some child; about half live within walking distance or a short ride; the remainder are in the same dwelling with a child.* These figures are especially impressive if one considers the rate at which American families move about, and the fact that young families move most rapidly of all.

Given this propinquity, it is not surprising that *more than two out of three aged parents see their children at least weekly.* Where there are not visits, they have been found to keep in touch – sometimes daily – by telephone. Beyond this, studies report an exchange of services between parents and their children, a day-to-day exchange that is typically spontaneous and reciprocal. When major crises occur,

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relatives near and far are the preferred source of help, and the first source of help. That parents are in general in touch with adult children, and on reasonably affectionate terms with them, does not of course mean that all parents are. Some do need help and don't get it; some are in fact lonely and neglected. They are, however, a minority.

This brief review of the relationship of adult children and their parents makes two things clear about complaints of family deterioration. Some of the facts on which the complaints are based are inaccurate. More important, whatever the facts are, they are interpreted as if society were static. Because families lived in the ways they did two hundred years ago, we should not attribute to them qualities of charity and filial responsibility. These qualities, if they existed, accounted for very little in their behavior. Filial relations are but one aspect of family relations. Similar analysis would show that marital relations, child-rearing patterns, and sexual patterns are not generally better or worse than they were years ago. They are in some respects better and in some respects worse. They are in many respects different. They are threads in a different fabric, and are not to be evaluated as if isolated or timeless.

Such evaluation, however, is likely to continue. The tendency to cry havoc serves purposes that are personal, venting anger for some and sharing distress for others. It serves purposes that are intellectual, providing a convenient framework in which to organize complex events. It may serve any side of a public issue, from the most liberal to the most reactionary. So long as anxiety about decaying family relations serves purposes that are internal and external, for people of all shades of political persuasion, there is little encouragement to hope that public statements will become more discriminating.

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# Notes on the new politics

PETER F. DRUCKER

The objective realtities to which American politics must address itself have been changing drastically in the last fifteen years or so:

- in population structure;
- in social and political structure;
- in respect to the power centers in American society;
- and in the international environment.

As a result, fundamental assumptions accepted as near axioms in both our domestic and our foreign policies are becoming increasingly untenable.

The issues around which American politics is tending to organize itself will increasingly be both new and different from those of the last half century. Long-accepted issues – or at least their traditional formulations – will increasingly come to appear unreal if not meaningless.

*Above all, the new realities are rapidly obsoleting traditional political alignments.*

Alignments that have molded the American political process for most of the last hundred years – the "bridge" role of the "Solid South" and its political power; the strategic role of economic blocs; and so on – are likely to lose their significance. This process is just beginning to be visible – above all in the turmoil and agony of the Republican

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Party. It is likely to change both parties, however, if not to revise the accepted polarization of American politics around "non-ideological" interests and around domestic affairs. It is also quite unlikely that foreign policies can continue to be "bi-partisan"; they are more likely to become the center of major political controversy.

President Johnson's "Great Society" represents a first response to some of the new issues, both at home and abroad. But it approaches these new issues largely within the old framework. It appeals primarily to the old values and it employs mostly the traditional rhetoric. It is thus essentially a transitional phase – and one would guess that the President is highly conscious of this. The emphasis on "consensus" is above all an attempt, both highly constructive and politically very dangerous, to accomplish some of the most important of the new tasks *before* they have become political issues. Even at its most successful, the era of "consensus", like any earlier "Era of Good Feeling," can therefore only be a prelude to a – probably prolonged – period of vocal dissent, violent political ferment, and sudden political landslides.

## New domestic realities

The recent past – the two decades since the end of World War II, or the fifteen years since the Korean War – has produced clearly visible shifts in the political, social, and economic realities at home and abroad.

In bald statement, the changes that appear most significant to me are:

(i) Within the last fifteen to twenty years, the United States has become a *Metropolitan Society* in which the great majority of the people live in a fairly small number of large, densely-populated metropolitan areas, dependent upon common services, each an intricate system of great technical and political complexity.

(ii) The center of gravity of the American work force has been shifting from manual worker – skilled or unskilled, on the farm or in workshop or factory – to *The Knowledge Worker* with a very high degree of formal schooling. For the knowledge worker, and for an economy based on knowledge work, poverty ceases to be the general condition of mankind. Not that the "knowledge worker" is "rich", but his income tends to be so high as to remove the constant anxiety about the next meal in which mankind as a whole has always lived. Above all, the knowledge worker enjoys a job security unknown to history.

As a further result of this shift to knowledge work, there is in process a radical change in the position of the manual worker. Neither his job security nor his income deteriorates. But he tends to be seen as economically "non-productive" and as socially "marginal". He is no longer seen as essential. In his stead the employed educated middle class is increasingly becoming the *New Majority*.

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(iii) Within these last fifteen years, the United States has become a society of big, semi-autonomous, and tightly-organized institutions. There is not only "big government" – Federal as well as State and municipal (within which the Civil Services and the Armed Forces represent large, tightly-organized power centers of their own, semi-autonomous and with their own rules and their own leaders), there is also the big university, the big hospital, the big labor union, and many others.

Business was only the first sphere in American society in which the large organization appeared – which explains in part why we tend to think of "business" whenever we say "bigness". American society, as indeed every modern industrial society, has become a *Pluralist Society* of big organizations, each serving one – but only one – of the purposes and needs of society.

The decisive interactions in American society today – and increasingly in American politics – are therefore interactions between highly organized, large, powerful, and professionalized institutions, each concerned with its own specific task.

(iv) Traditional federalism sees relationships of co-existence and competition between the federal government and the various states. But in the *New Federalism* other political units in addition to the states (especially the metropolitan areas) are directly in relation with the Federal Government and work directly with it. More important, perhaps, institutions that are not "government" but "private" increasingly become the agents of government in the fulfillment of public functions and even in the formulation of public policy – the universities, the big corporations, the large teaching hospitals.

(v) There is an emergence of new power centers in our society, rivalling if not already over-shadowing the traditional power centers of American politics, such as the traditional economic interests. These new power centers are: *The Military, Education,* and *Big Science.* True, education, while rapidly becoming the largest single employer in this country and the largest single investor of capital, is not yet organized as a power center. Yet surely the emphasis on the diploma as a condition of employment represents a tremendous social victory for the educator and puts him in a position of social control such as this country never before granted to any single group.

Military strength and educational strength are now seen as the twin pillars of national strength in the modern world, and as the two attributes of great power status.

These two power centers, the military and education, come together in the commitment of government to the promotion of *Scientific and Technological Thrust* as a major new national responsibility and a major new national purpose.

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### New domestic issues

(i) In domestic politics we have already *shifted from economically-centered issues to issues that are basically political: constitutional, moral, and aesthetic.* The outstanding example is of course civil rights. Indeed civil rights is a major issue only because it became apparent that economics alone cannot provide citizenship to the American Negro.

The "War on Poverty," too, though it uses economic terminology, is a shift away from the economic and towards the political. It was imposed by an affluent society on itself by its own bad conscience — and, in large measure, by an aesthetic concern with the squalor and ugliness in which so many live in an economy of abundance.

The educated professional employee, on the other hand, is altogether

— prone to alienation rather than to poverty;

— beset by the fear of futility rather than by lack of income.

What he lacks is not a job but the satisfaction of achievement and a sense of function. The creation of such satisfaction will be a basic purpose of American politics.

(ii) *Congress* and its function may well become an issue by itself. The developments of the last two decades have largely pushed Congress out of being a partner in political decisions. It is being reduced, instead, in a good many areas, to being a critic and commentator. The complex arrangements of the New Federalism are largely beyond the power of Congress, if not altogether beyond its purview.

### Issues in international politics

The central reality which is likely to generate, or at least to shape, the issues in American international politics is the fading away of the two axioms on which American foreign policy has been based since World War II: the axiom that the international economy was dependent upon the U.S. economy, rather than that there was interdependence; and the much more important axiom that "Communism" and "Russia" were synonymous, and both words for "the enemy."

As the result of the erosion of these axioms, it is no longer possible to assume that any action taken by the United States in its capacity of leader of the Free World community is automatically in the interest of the United States as a nation, and vice versa. The national-interest approach might, for instance, give us a "soft" policy in respect to China where the world-leadership approach might lead to a very "hard" one, i.e., containing Chinese aggression anywhere and everywhere.

Bi-partisanship in foreign affairs cannot last. "Pragmatism" has had its day; we now need policy again.

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## II. POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS

The most important decisions of the last fifteen years in American politics were made essentially outside of the political process proper. They could have hardly been made within it – they concerned issues on which no decision is possible within the traditional alignments.

The two crucial decisions in domestic politics during the last decade or so were probably School Segregation and Reapportionment. Both were reached – without any political discussion to speak of – by the Supreme Court, that is by an organ outside of party politics.

Similarly in foreign affairs: the most important decision was surely the one that committed us to a major war in Vietnam. This decision was reached without any "decision" whatever, and certainly without any public debate. I happen to believe the Vietnam choice to have been the right one. Still, what is amazing is not that there has been criticism of our involvement in Vietnam but that there has been so little discussion and so little dissent.

Indeed, the most important among the traditional alignments of American policy are in the process of disappearing altogether.

### The South loses its casting vote

During the last few years, one of the two main bases of the traditional alignments, the "Compromise of 1876," has in effect been repealed.

The history books tell us little of this Compromise other than that it seated a Republican presidential candidate (Rutherford Hayes) who had actually been outpolled by his Democratic opponent, in exchange for which the Federal government withdrew the troops that had kept the "carpet-bagger" administrations in power in the states of the former Confederacy. But implicit in this deal – as was clearly understood by all concerned – was a far-reaching compact between North and South. It guaranteed the South non-interference in its "domestic institution," that is, the unchallenged maintenance of white supremacy. In exchange the South promised tacitly to accept and not to challenge the leadership of the North in all areas excepting only race relations. This was expressed in the common saying that no Southerner could become president.

The compromise gave the South power in American politics, and especially in Congress, way beyond its population strength, way beyond even the quality of Southern leadership. One reason for this was the control by the Southerners of the chairmanship of important congressional committees as a combined result of the congressional seniority system and the unchallenged one-party structure of the South.

More important, perhaps, though much less visible, was the

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function of the South as the *bridge* between the major parties and major factions; this guaranteed almost every president a workable majority in Congress, but also made the South indispensable. It was obviously to the interest of the South not to have any one party predominate in Congress: the Southerners in Congress, therefore, always tended to make common cause with the minority – except in times of great emergency, such as the outbreak of war or the first hundred days of Roosevelt's New Deal.

For ninety years, practically every Administration has faced a coalition in Congress in which the South, though the junior partner, essentially dictated the terms.

The proximate cause for the "repeal" of the Compromise of 1876 was the northward migration of the Negro which began after World War I. With the Negro in the North having formal political equality, deprivation of the same rights in the South could no longer be considered a "domestic affair". As soon as – following the Supreme Court school decision of 1954 – the Federal Government attacked white supremacy in the South, the Southerners ceased, therefore, to honor their part of the bargain. This in large part explains the frustration of President Kennedy's domestic policies.

But the ultimate cause of the sharp change in the position of the South in American politics is the shift in the white population and its distribution. Because the Old South has tended to stay heavily rural and small-town, it no longer has the numbers to support a bridge-role and to cast the deciding vote. Or, rather, a South that stays rural and small-town cannot have enough population to matter – while a South that becomes metropolitan ceases to be the "Solid South," as Atlanta and Miami have demonstrated.

That both Mr. Truman and Mr. Johnson were not supported by the South amounted to a renunciation of the traditional alliance. But that both could be elected without the votes of the South was much more important: it proved that the South no longer held the balance of power. Even Mr. Kennedy would still have been elected, despite the hair-line margin in his popular vote, if most of the states of the Old Confederacy had given their electoral votes to a States Rights Southerner. That, as a by-product, a Southerner has been shown to be capable of winning both nomination and election to the presidency is a rather meager consolation.

The price in civil rights that the nation paid for the bridge-role of the South was, of course, exorbitant. But in terms of contemporary American politics, during these ninety years, the peculiar role of the South has on the whole been healthy and productive.

There is a belief abroad that the Southerners in Congress tended to be "reactionaries." But this holds true only for their position on race relations, which did not become an issue in American politics until

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the Depression and perhaps not until World War II. Otherwise, the Southerner in Congress was more often than not a populist radical. But above all, to preserve the power position of the South, the Southerner in Congress had no choice but to seek a consensus. National policy did not shift to the left or to the right because the South shifted: the South shifted because the national center shifted first. In effect, the Southerners always had to make it possible for "liberals" and "conservatives" to agree at least sufficiently to permit the business of government to go on.

The long-serving committee chairmen, while often autocratic and immovable, also usually did their homework and thoroughly knew their area. They endowed Congress with a solid backbone of expertise such as no other parliamentary body in the world possesses. One would be hard-pressed to find men who worked harder or who knew their area better than the two men from Georgia, Senator Russell and Congressman Vinson, who for so many years headed the Armed Services Committees in their branches of Congress. It is this expert knowledge that makes Congress still capable of dealing with the Federal bureaucracy and gives us a degree of political and policy control over the Civil Service such as is unknown in any other modern nation.

In foreign affairs, the absence of major manufacturing and labor union interests in the South enabled the Southerner often to regard the national interest, and to take a much larger view than the Midwesterner or New Englander, swayed as he so often has been by the immediate, short-sighted interests of this or that company or industry.

Finally, "that no Southerner could become President" meant that the senior Southerners in Congress had no further ambition, and knew that they had to make their mark in history through their performance as legislators.

For better or worse this position of the South is gone.

It is no accident that for the first time in the history of the Senate a civil-rights filibuster could be broken so decisively (in the fight over President Kennedy's Civil Rights bill) that, two years later, the South did not even try to filibuster against Mr. Johnson's much more sweeping bill of 1965. It is no accident, either, that, for the first time since the present system of committee chairmen was introduced around the turn of the century, committee members have successfully revolted against their chairman (against Representative Smith of Virginia, the Chairman of the House Rules Committee, and Representative Patman of Texas of the House Banking Committee).

I am by no means convinced that the South will abandon the one-party system. It is conceivable that, for many years to come, the pressures toward conformity, and for resistance to an alien and critical

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outside world, may enforce strict voting discipline – to the point where opposition candidiates have no chance at all in large areas.

But even if nothing changes in the South, it would not matter greatly one way or another. For almost a century, the arrival of a two-party system in the South has been looked forward to by "liberals", inside and outside the South, as the hour of deliverance, if not as the panacea for all the ills of the South. It is ironic that, just when the two-party system has a real chance to establish itself in the South, it has also become quite unimportant. In national affairs the South must increasingly cease to be something separate, indeed something unique. Whatever is left of the "Old South" is rapidly becoming just another sparsely settled and relatively poor section of the country – and, as such, a fairly unimportant one.

### The erosion of the economic blocs

The second major shift in the structure of alignments in American politics is the steady erosion of the traditional economic blocs. These blocs – whether "labor" or "farmer" or "business" – *can no longer be carriers of policies.* They can only, increasingly, become *obstacles* to any policy whatever – for any change is, in effect, a threat to them.

The three agencies of the Federal government which reached cabinet status between the Civil War and World War II were Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor. Each was created to represent a major economic estate of the realm, and to make sure that its interests were protected. The particular interest group which any one of these bureaucracies represented had a virtual veto power over the appointment of the Secretary. Indeed, the secretaries often behaved like ambassadors of a powerful foreign sovereign rather than as members of the President's Cabinet.

By sharp contrast, the two new Cabinet posts created since World War II (leaving out Defense as a special case in which formerly separate agencies of Cabinet rank were consolidated) were Health, Education and Welfare, and Housing and Urban Affairs – both established not to represent economic interests but *to remove major areas of policy from the control of, and domination by, economic interests.* And the proposal to make Transportation a Cabinet department serves the same purpose.

Of all the traditional groups, only one has an opportunity to remain influential and a carrier of policy: the "managers". For managing is a function that is essential in all the new big organizations; indeed, managing is the specific function of big complex organizations – whether business or armed service, university or government agency or hospital. But, of course, the only reason why this group might survive as a distinct and organized power-center is that the

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"capitalist" of yesterday had been replaced by the "professional manager" of today who is not confined to one economic interest but pervades the entire society and who is not exclusively economically-oriented. The extent to which managers have succeeded in the much-publicized attempt to make themselves "trustees" for all the interests in the organization – employees, investors, customers and so on – is a moot point. That they are trying is the important point. This explains why President Johnson has been wooing them – they are a bridge between yesterday's alignments and tomorrow's alignments and, as such, essential to Mr. Johnson's "consensus."

"Labor," by contrast, has not even begun such a transformation. Except in the event of a major economic crisis, it seems rather unlikely that a sufficiently large part of the "employed professional middle class" will unionize itself, not only to restore "labor's" vitality and growth potential, but also to change the characteristics of "labor" even more drastically than the change from "capitalist" to "manager" has transformed the characteristics of the "business" interest. The aims of a unionized professional middle class are, in any case, likely to be social rather than economic. And insofar as they are economic, they are likely to be in direct conflict with the economic aims of the rank-and-file blue-collar worker of the traditional unions.

The traditional economic blocs no longer represent the dynamics of American society, if only because the big tasks and the big problems are not economic but political, social, moral, or aesthetic. This does not mean that the economic blocs will become unimportant or powerless. The farmer, for instance, has long ceased to have the key position he had up until World War I; but the farm lobby is losing its importance only very slowly.

What does, however, happen is that such groups become purely negative. Any change is a threat to them. The aims of policy are not their aims. They therefore become increasingly "vested interests," concerned with the maintenance of a privileged status. Extortion, rather than policy, becomes their business.

### The changing role of ethnic blocs

The most confusing area is that of ethnic and religious blocs, such as the Irish Catholics, the Jews, the Italians, and so on.

In different parts of the metropolis, their importance will change in different directions.

In the core city, the old "downtown" – the five boroughs of New York, for instance – such blocs should become much more important. The Negro clearly is just now emerging as an organized and powerful ethnic bloc in the core city. His tendency to act as a bloc in city politics must increase; for the individual Negro can achieve advancement and access to opportunities only through organized use of his

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political power, that is, as a bloc and through "patronage." The same applies to the Puerto Rican and to the Mexican-American.

This, in turn, is likely to force other groups in the core city to organize themselves and act as blocs. The way in which Irish Catholics in Boston, for instance, have again coalesced as a bloc to beat off a Negro attack on the "neighborhood school" is only an example. And the same holds true of other ethnic groups largely composed of industrial workers or lower-grade service employees, such as the Czechs in Chicago, the Poles in Cleveland, and the Hungarians in Pittsburgh.

Outside the core city, however, in the suburban areas of the metropolis, ethnic blocs are likely to become very much less important. Regardless of his origin (unless he should be a Negro), the suburbanite sees himself characterized by his education – which tends to be advanced – and by his cultural level, rather than by his origin. In fact, he is likely to resent too blatant an appeal to his origin, as questioning his status in the American community.

Ethnic or religious blocs are, therefore, likely to become complicated – with both appeal to them and non-appeal equally unpredictable. Inside the core city, the blocs can be expected to become far more important – and with this advent would come the strong "boss" and the appeal to "solidarity" instead of issues, ideas, or men. Outside the core city, ethnic origin is likely to mean less and less – though religious affiliation may still play an important role in a number of areas.

### Core city and suburb

The different appeal of ethnic and religious blocs in core city and suburb respectively is only one of the differences that are likely to characterize these two elements of the metropolis and that eventually might divide them sharply in national politics.

Altogether, *the core city is increasingly likely to present yesterday's politics, yesterday's issues, and yesterday's alignment.* The very fact that bloc voting is likely to be such a factor will make the core city look to the past rather than to the future – plus the fact, of course, that the core city is likely to be the least affluent part of the "affluent society". The suburbs, representing the young people and therefore the more highly educated and more prosperous citizens, are likely to be looking, increasingly, towards tomorrow's problems, especially towards the problems of the metropolitan area.

Also, the core city will increasingly have to bear the burden of the metropolitan services while having fewer and fewer tax resources. These latter will be in the suburbs – indeed, it is conceivable that deterioration of the core city will bring a mass exodus of business headquarters to the suburbs. Some of the biggest companies have

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already moved out. This will create increasing demands on the part of the core city that the suburbs become part of its tax domain – and increasing resistance to the core city on the part of the suburbanites.

But more important than these tangible factors are probably the intangible ones. Increasingly, these two parts of the metropolis will represent two facets of metropolitan culture. It is not only the man from Iowa who says, "New York is a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there." The man from Westchester County feels this even more strongly.

It is, therefore, conceivable that the geographic alignments in this country – between North and South; between country and town; between agrarian and industrial society – may be gradually replaced by *a split between the core city and the suburbs throughout all regions and all areas of the country.* It is conceivable that tomorrow the job of building a national party will, in effect, mean bringing together enough groups from those two constituent parts of the metropolis behind one program and one candidate. It is also conceivable that tomorrow's political parties will primarily be characterized by having a "core city" or a "suburban" temperament.

## The impact on the parties

The change in alignments which is already in full swing is likely to present serious problems to both parties.

(i) *The Struggle for a Republican Future*

In terms of its traditional vote base, the Republican Party has become *the permanent minority party* – and becoming the majority in the Old South would not in any way change this; it would rather accentuate the isolation of the Republican Party. The reason for this is that the Republican Party today is "White Protestant" by temperament, no matter how many Jews, Catholics, or Negroes vote the Republican ticket. And the "White Protestant" is no longer the political majority.

Statistically, of course, white Protestants do constitute two-thirds of the population. Culturally, also, this is, and will remain, a white Protestant country (despite the prevalence of Jewish jokes and Italian pizza). But, politically, a "White Protestant" party is no longer capable of organizing majority support. Almost half of the white Protestants in the country are rural and smalltown, and as such are not an adequate foundation for national power any more. In the metropolis, the white Protestant group is just about half or less, but does not see itself as a coherent group and does not vote as such – precisely because it does not see itself as the minority. And minorities, that is, groups that otherwise would have little influence and little voice, are the ones that see the need for organizing themselves for the fight for power.

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What the strategies are that are available to the permanent minority party we know. For this was the position of the Democrats for sixty long years, from the Civil War until Franklin D. Roosevelt's election in 1932. In fact, there are only two strategies available – and the Party is likely to be torn internally by the fight between the adherents of either.

There is, first, the "*moderate*" strategy – the strategy of those who essentially say "me too." They expect to come to power precisely because it is not easy to tell them apart from the majority party – except that they are "out" and therefore not responsible for a catastrophe, a scandal, or whatever accident befalls the majority party in power. In such a situation, the "moderates" hope to be able to attract enough protest votes from the majority party to get into power and to start working on making themselves in turn the permanent majority.

The second strategy is the *radical* one which aims to recreate a new party "dedicated to principles." In tune with the ancestor-worship that characterizes the rhetoric of American politics, this strategy is likely to present itself as aiming at the restoration of the ideals of the past. William Jennings Bryan was a "Fundamentalist" and Goldwater a "Conservative." Actually, the strategy aims at creating a major crisis and hopes to capitalize on it.

Both strategies have rather stringent prerequisites – none of which is likely to be satisfied for the Republicans in the present situation. The moderates can only operate if they control some important power centers – such as the Democrats' control of the Solid South and of the big cities of the North in the long years of their exile after the Civil War. Specifically, the Republican moderates would have to gain control of major metropolitan areas. This would probably require the consolidation of core city and suburbs into one political unit. The voting strength of the Republicans in the suburbs, however, rests squarely on their promise not to let the core city "gobble up" the suburbs.

For the radical strategy to work – short of a catastrophe such as this country has so far been spared – requires a candidate who has shown ability for political leadership and enough maturity not to frighten off potential recruits from the moderate ranks of his own party as well as from the opposition. If all he does is to attract the radicals of the other party (as Bryan and Goldwater did), he almost insures defeat through distrust on the part of the great majority which fears (and rightly) political adventurers.

This, however, only means that the *Republican Party is unlikely to make up its mind for either strategy* – just as Democrats did not decide, before the New Deal. This would guarantee long years of internal turmoil for the Republican Party, in the course of which the

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first aim of each Republican politician is likely to be to prevent the victory of another Republican rather than to defeat a Democrat. As John Lindsay's campaign in New York City showed, the only way for a Republican to win in such a situation is to be as little of a Republican as possible and to try to be accepted as a genuine "Independent."

The Republicans will, therefore, be forced to look for issues that can unite them and to shun isues that must divide them. Because of the shift in alignments within the country, domestic issues are almost certain to divide the Republicans – save only in the event of international catastrophe, serious depression, or truly sensational scandal. The Republicans may, therefore, attempt to make foreign policy into the platform that unites them; and it is possible that, for the first time since the very early days of the Republic, a major party will organize itself on a foreign affairs platform rather than on a domestic platform.

(ii) *The Dilemma of the Democrats*

The Democratic Party, too, will be seriously affected by the shifting alignments. It has to gain the allegiance of the "new majority," the educated employed middle class. But it must at the same time hold the allegiance of the old power groups, the economic blocs and the ethnic blocs. The attempt to hold the one is likely to alienate the other. It may alienate both – as did the Democratic strategy in the 1965 New York City elections, in which the patent attempt to have the "right" old-fashioned ticket – one Jew, one Irish Catholic, one Italian and so on – only made the younger and better-educated members of these groups cross over and go Republican in large numbers.

In this dilemma, the Democratic Party will try to focus on the issues likely to unify these two groups – and these are the *urban issues:* the metropolis, health care, and – above all – education. By the same token it is likely to play down what will divide these two groups: the old-style economic issues, and foreign affairs:

(iii) *Creating a New Majority*

Victory, in the long run, will not go to the party that does the best job glueing together the shards of yesterday. Victory will go to whoever creates a new national alignment and a new power base, resting not on economic interests but on the "new majority" of the educated professional middle class, and capable of crystallizing the issues that are meaningful to them. (The last time a similar job was done in American politics was after the election of 1896, when Marc Hanna used the economic blocs to erect the structure that is still housing American politics, even though the tenant has changed.) Today one can barely even speculate what these alignments might be and on what they might rest.

There is, thus, great opportunity for creative party politics – and great need for it. Politicians are needed who can establish the new

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alignments — politicians who can dramatize the new issues and mobilize the new power centers.

## III. POLITICS FOR A NEW GENERATION

So far I have given an inventory rather than an analysis. Even if correct in every detail, it would still not enable us to anticipate American politics in the years ahead. What matters in politics is far less the specific problems and the answers found to them, than the pattern, the configuration. It is not what issues are debated, but what emphasis is given to issues in relation to each other and in a scale of political values. It is not so much what laws are being written as what kind of personality can exercise leadership. Measures and policy matter less than the mood and the basic assumptions.

The most important fact with respect to this configuration of tomorrow may well be that the United States — indeed the whole world — is in the midst of a major generational shift.

The outward sign of this is, of course, that so many of the world's political leaders — from President Johnson to Chairman Mao — are so clearly the last of their line, by age alone. Their formative years were the 'twenties and 'thirties — but even the post-war era of the 'forties and 'fifties is rapidly becoming history.

In terms of age structure of the population, the United States is not a particularly young country today — compared with underdeveloped Latin America, India, or China, for instance, where the "population explosion," propelled by drastic cuts in infant mortality, is pushing the average age of population down to 15 or so. But compared to its own history and recent experience, *the United States is becoming a very young country indeed,* with half the population already less than 26 years old — and most of them highly educated and with experiences and expectations that differ markedly from those that still underlie our social, political, and economic policies. The middle generation (ages 30 to 50), by contrast, is very thin in this country today and bound to get thinner for another decade — the result, of course, of the lean birth years of the 'thirties. By 1972, more than half of all Americans old enough to vote will be under 32 ( a fact which, however, no politician, except Senator Robert Kennedy, seems to have found out).

Power and position are therefore likely to pass fast from people whose working life began before or during the Great Depression to people to whom the depression is, at the very best, a dim childhood memory — if not to people to whom even World War II is something they heard about in their high school courses. President Johnson's young men — his Assistants in their early thirties — are only the advance guard of the generation that must get to the top in all important areas of American life very soon — in business and in government,

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in the universities and in the Armed Services, and perhaps even in the labor unions.

But this, even more than a shift in chronological age, is a shift in outlook, perception, and formative experience. The world this new generation of Americans considers as "normal" is one of long years of advanced education, of very high job security, of affluence, a world dominated by science and technology. It is also a world of international turmoil and dangers such as would have been unimaginable to their parents at the same age.

Even greater perhaps is the jump in perception. What the new generation takes for granted, the older one has not really learned to see. For the new generation takes for granted

- the "global village": that is, the integration of the entire earth through communications into one locus of immediate experience;
- "man in space": that is, the reaching out beyond what were considered the human limits of existence;
- technology, both in respect to doing physical tasks and in respect to making economic problems amenable to systematic, organized, and essentially technical solutions.

This new perception may not at all have the results most people envisage. But it will have very significant results.

The perception of the "global village" may not make us more "internationalist." Indeed, it may considerably discourage the old American missionary impulse to do things *for* others without necessarily increasing the desire – also an old American tradition – to do things *with* others. The perception of the "global village" is, however, likely to make us stop seeing the outside world through European glasses (whether that of the German *savant* or the English Fabian), which is the way the American "liberal" has always seen the world.

There are even strong indications that the new generation will turn away from the "secularism" of their parents – not to organized religion but to a new "inner-directedness" with stress on personal values and personal commitment. Most of the "crazy mixed-up kids" on the campuses today will, of course, grow up into depressingly sane adult conformists – and they are a tiny minority, in any case. But they might signal a shift ahead in values and concerns; a shift towards moral and aesthetic values and towards a concern with the person.

This is, however, mere speculation. What one can say with a good deal of assurance is that the generation shift ahead is likely to be also a political shift – a shift in the climate, the mood, the values, the alignments and issues of American politics.

Such a shift is bound to be disorderly. It implies a *time of transition* likely to be characterized by vocal dissent, by sudden sharp landslides burying long-familiar landmarks, by partisanship, and by

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political passion. It is not likely to be a time of "consensus;" it is exceedingly unlikely to be a time of political apathy; and foreign affairs is likely to be one of the political storm centers.

The election of 1964 clearly marked a watershed in American politics. We now face a period rather similar to that after 1896, if not after 1822 – periods that ended an "Era of Good Feeling" and brought lasting realignment to American politics.

### The Great Society — substance and rhetoric

In its concerns, President Johnson's "Great Society" clearly addresses itself to the new realities and to tomorrow's issues. Its main domestic themes are the metropolis, education, health care, and the aesthetics of an industrial society – not to mention its basic morality. In his most significant speech to date, the speech on the Negro in America given at Howard University last summer, the President clearly put ethics into the center of his politics.

The Johnson Administration, also, has begun work on some of the *constitutional* problems. (This, by the way, is one area where it continues what President Kennedy began.) The "White House Conferences" – on education, for instance, or on the natural environment – at least remove the planning of the "New Federalism" from the inner office and subject it to public exposure. And the new subordination of the military to civilian control, however much it may be due to the personality and forcefulness of one particular Secretary of Defense, was clearly, from the beginning, Presidential policy as well.

Even in international affairs – where both the Kennedy and the Johnson Administrations have been neither "bold" nor "innovators" – new thinking may have begun, if only because of the realities of Southeast Asia.

But in its rhetoric, the "Great Society" is old, and addresses itself to yesterday.

"Consensus," as President Johnson uses that term, means in effect bringing *all* of yesterday's power groups (and especially all economic interests) together behind one policy for today's problems. In particular, of course, it means bringing in the one economic interest that has hitherto not joined up with the other economic interests in a common economic policy: the business interest.

In practical politics, "consensus" unites all who accept the accomplished facts of yesterday and excludes only the irreconcilables who still want to repeal history.

The effectiveness of this approach, at least so far, cannot be denied. It has enabled the Johnson Administration to get more done than any administration in living memory. It has above all enabled the Johnson Administration to get more of the *new* tasks done. I doubt that this country – or any other – has ever seen greater skill or more

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purpose than the President exhibits when he uses the near-unanimity of the country on the problems of yesterday to advance new solutions to the problems of today. Perhaps the one thing wrong with the President's effective use of "consensus" to solve problems and respond to challenges, *before* they can become issues, is that it is done so skillfully that many do not fully appreciate an extraordinary performance.

There probably is no other way to get done what Mr. Johnson gets done – the experience of his predecessor would indicate this. Mr. Kennedy, too, was a man of the transition period. But he reversed the balance between substance and rhetoric. In his actions he was primarily concerned with clearing up and finishing the tasks of yesterday; and his politics was clearly based on the old, New Deal alignments. But his rhetoric – his "style" if you please – was that of a new generation. Yet he had to fight every inch of the way and accomplished, essentially, very little. This cannot be blamed on Congress: President Johnson had the same Congress during his first year and got out of it all the actions it had refused President Kennedy. President Johnson, in other words, may have had to smother dissent to get any action whatever.

There are great dangers, however, in the politics of "consensus," and they are likely to grow with time.

The first danger is clearly that of *losing the young* – the "new majority" of the educated professional middle class.

There is little doubt, I believe, that the President is no hero to this group. Indeed, there is little doubt that this is the one group in which Mr. Goldwater in 1964 found a great deal of response. This is, in terms of the *old* issues, a very conservative group – yesterday's "liberal" rhetoric is bound to bore them. That they have much interest in the program of the Extreme Right is very doubtful. But at least the Goldwaterites talked "principles."

Quite apart from personality – and Mr. Johnson is so clearly, unlike his predecessor, not one of the "new generation" and not really "sophisticated" – Mr. Johnson is in danger of being totally misunderstood by the "new majority." They are likely to miss the policy in his actions altogether, and to mistake it for a clever publicity gimmick. Altogether they are likely to hear cleverness where they expect conviction.

How long it will remain prudent, therefore, to risk losing the young by not talking policy (even though talking policy will certainly alienate the old power groups) is a fundamental question for Mr. Johnson. Will he still be able to get through to the young if he waits? Does he indeed even understand, after all these years in the Congress, that it is conflict that creates political excitement, generates support, and mobilizes hitherto uncommitted political energies?

Another real danger is that "consensus" which smothers dissent

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*also smothers discussion and understanding.* This is particularly dangerous in foreign policy today, precisely because we may have to execute rather startling shifts fast. The public is totally unprepared. And the public has been kept intentionally in the dark – whether the reason for this be Mr. Johnson's dislike of criticism, or his fear that discussion of his policies might restrict his freedom of movement. Very few people in this country even understand that we have committed ourselves to a major new task – that of the containment of China. Fewer still realize the great challenges to our traditional military, diplomatic, and economic policy that lie ahead in Europe. The reason why this is so dangerous is, of course, that there is grave risk of a violent and irrational reaction should anything go wrong – and something surely will, in so complex and precarious a world.

But the greatest weaknesses of the politics of "consensus" are in their *restrictions on Presidential leadership,* both in respect to formulating policy and in respect to building the new political alignments.

The new thinking is not being done. Mr. Johnson may expect new policies to grow out of his actions. He could be right. *But, in politics, deeds do not necessarily speak louder than words.* And the words are not being said. That Mr. Johnson is capable of saying them – forcefully, indeed movingly – he showed in his Howard University speech. But despite (perhaps because of?) his constant public exposure, Mr. Johnson clearly refrains from formulating a new political point of view, a new political idea, a new political direction. And he may, thereby, misjudge the country and the times. There seems to me to be an expectation in the land, a sense of foreboding beneath all the prosperity, a receptivity for seriousness that is not being satisfied.

The politics of consensus also makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the President to be the *political master-builder,* the designer of the new alignments and the modeller of the new – or at least the changed – configuration of forces, perceptions, and ideas which the new realities at home and abroad demand. He is, perforce, so busy making the old configuration serve a little longer that he does not seem to have any time left over to work on creating a new one.

This is not said in criticism. In fact, it would be hard to imagine what else President Johnson could have done – and there is no doubt that what he is doing, he is doing with consummate skill. But it nevertheless seems likely that the question whether the "Great Society" is indeed a destination for the American people or a mere whistle stop which later generations will pass by, will be decided by Mr. Johnson's ability to become the master-builder of tomorrow – despite the need to preserve, indeed to perpetuate, yesterday.

That the Johnson Administration is one of transition is clear. But is the future going to see it as a transition *from* the Old, or as a transition *to* the New?

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# The case for an income guarantee

JAMES TOBIN

In the national campaign to conquer poverty there are two basic strategies, which may be labelled concisely, if somewhat inaccurately, "structural" and "distributive." The structural strategy is to build up the capacities of the poorest fifth of the population to earn decent incomes. The distributive strategy is to assure every family a decent standard of living regardless of its earning capacity. In my opinion both strategies are essential; correctly designed, they are more complementary than competitive. To date the main emphasis of the Federal "war on poverty" has been the structural approach. I shall argue that the war will not be won without a new and imaginative distributive strategy as well.

General economic progress raises the earning capacities of the populations at large — even of the less educated, less skilled, less experienced, less motivated, and less healthy. Even without Federal programs (other than overall fiscal and monetary policies to keep the labor force fully employed and the economy growing), the incidence of poverty gradually declines. Measuring poverty by the government's official income standard ($3130 a year for 4-person nonfarm families, and amounts estimated to yield comparable standards

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of living for households of other sizes and circumstances), its incidence has fallen from 22 percent to 17 percent since 1959.

The "war on poverty" testifies that the decline has not been fast enough for the American conscience. But accelerating it by structural measures is bound to be a slow and expensive process. Adults must be trained or retrained; they must acquire work experience, good work habits, self-confidence, and motivation; they must be made medically fit for regular employment; they must be placed in jobs and often moved to new locations. What is required is almost a case-by-case approach. Leaving the aged aside, there are about 8 million poor households including 9½ million persons of ages 22-54 and 3 million in ages 16-21. The task of upgrading the earning capacities of the present generation of adults is staggering, a fact which in no way diminishes the importance of the effort or the value of each individual success.

The earning capacities of the next generation may be successfully raised by general structural measures – radical improvements in the education, health, and residential environment of the 14 million children of the poor. Again, the urgent importance of these efforts is in no way dimmed by recognizing the great difficulties they confront.

But the structural strategy will take many years, probably more than a generation. Even then its success will be incomplete; there will remain a hard core of families with inadequate earning capacity because of ineradicable physical, psychological, or circumstantial disabilities. And in the interim many more families, with disabilities remediable but not remedied, will fail to earn a decent living.

### Today's symptoms, tomorrow's causes

A distributive strategy is necessary, too, and the sooner the better. Families must have a minimally decent standard of living, whether or not they now have the ability to earn it in the job market. This can be provided by public assistance, and to withhold it from poor families is neither just (since their disabilities are, if not irremediable, the consequences of past discriminations and deficiencies in public services) nor necessary (since the upper four-fifths of the nation can surely afford the 2 percent of Gross National Product which would bring the lowest fifth across the poverty line).

Sometimes income assistance is scorned as treating the symptoms of poverty, in contrast to the structural strategy, which treats the causes. This reproach is not justified. For one thing, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with treating symptoms, and sometimes it is the best the doctors can do. More seriously, the symptoms of today's poverty may be the causes of tomorrow's. The conditions of life in which many children now grow up may predestine them to low earning capacity as adults.

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However, many of those who distrust the distributive strategy have a more sophisticated point in mind. They are afraid that more generous income assistance to the poor will actually retard improvements in their earning capacities. If a decent standard of living is guaranteed, why should anyone work to get it or to acquire the ability to earn it on his own? For centuries this cynicism about human nature has been the excuse by which the affluent have relieved their individual and collective consciences and pocketbooks of the burden of their less fortunate brethren.

We cannot dismiss the question just because it has a shabby history. "Human nature" is not a reason to withhold public subsidies from people with low-earning capacity. But it definitely is a reason to give the subsidies in a way that does not destroy but indeed reinforces the incentives of the recipients to work and to increase the economic value of their work. The war on poverty needs a distributive strategy, but one that is carefully designed to support and strengthen its structural strategy.

Unfortunately our present congeries of public assistance programs – Federal, state, and local – has just the opposite effect. The incentives built in to our present subsidy programs are perverse. Unless public assistance is reformed and rationalized, it will seriously handicap the structural weapons deployed in the campaign against poverty. An improved public assistance program will not be cheap. If it is designed to aid rather than retard the conquest of poverty, its cost will for some years be more than our present programs. But it offers the hope that the conditions giving rise to the need for public subsidies will gradually be remedied.

## II

What are the defects of public assistance today? First is its inadequacy. Our governments administer a bewildering variety of welfare and social insurance programs, from Federal Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) to township relief. *Yet half of the poor benefit from none of these; and most of the public money spent to supplement personal incomes goes to families above the poverty line.*

These facts are shocking but not as surprising as they may at first appear. Eligibility to benefit from most government income supplements depends on circumstances quite remote from current economic need. For social insurance – OASDI and unemployment compensation – eligibility and size of benefits depend on past contributions by the individual or his employer. Many programs assist particular groups – veterans, farmers, retired railroad workers, the blind, etc.

Even in the main noncontributory general assistance programs,

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economic need is a necessary condition for benefits but not a sufficient one. The most important of these is Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC), administered under Federal supervision by the states and localities, and financed almost wholly by Federal funds. AFDC payments are based on need, but the several states define need with widely varying degrees of realism and seldom attempt to meet fully even their own calculations of need. A 1961 study showed that the Middle Atlantic states met all the income requirements they estimated. The East South Central States – Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama – estimated need at 20% less, met on average only 61% (Mississippi 38%) of the need so estimated, and met full need in only 3% of their cases. Federal law permits payments only to families with children, and of these only to families without an employed male adult – where, in effect, the father has died or deserted, or is disabled or unemployed. Most states restrict eligibility more than the Federal law requires.

There are also Federally financed programs of assistance to the aged and disabled, which fill some of the gaps Social Security still leaves both in eligibility and in adequacy of benefits. For the indigent who qualify for nothing else there is old-fashioned local relief, but here the applicant may run afoul of local residence requirements and other defensive stratagems.

### Incentives in reverse

Second, public assistance is geared to need in a manner that provides perverse incentives to those dependent upon it. One major destructive incentive is the one which AFDC gives for the break-up or non-formation of families. *Too often a father can provide for his children only by leaving both them and their mother*. It is hard to imagine a social contrivance more surely designed to perpetuate dependence on "welfare" in one generation after the other. We know that the major problems of poor people of all colors are related, as both cause and effect, to unstable and chaotic family structures. We know that, for historical reasons, Negro families tend to be matriarchal. We know the crucial importance of home environment in education, and we know the dangers of depriving boys of male adult models .To accentuate all these difficulties by deliberate public policy is a piece of collective insanity which it would be hard to match.

The "means test" provides other disincentives – disincentives to work, to save, to gain skills. The "means test" seems innocent enough in appearance and intent. It says that the welfare payments shall be made only if, and only to the extent that, the family cannot meet its needs (as officially calculated) from its own resources. Thus if, in a given locality, the effective standard of need (which may be only a fraction of an estimated minimal budget) for a mother and four chil-

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dren is $2500 a year, the family will receive $2500 from the state if its members earn nothing on their own, $1500 if they earn $1000, $500 if they earn $2000, and so on. This arrangement, under which your total take-home pay is the same no matter how much you earn, is obviously not designed to encourage work or training for future work. One way to describe it is to say that the marginal tax rate on earnings is (so long as earnings do not exceed $2500 in the example) 100%. The accuracy of this description, so far as incentive effects are concerned, is not impaired by the fact that the "tax" on additional earnings is not a literal payment to the government but a reduction in the government payment to the family.

The means test also discourages thrift. Consider two self-supporting families, one of whom saves while the other incurs debts. When and if misfortunes occur, the welfare authorities will give full help to the second but will generally force the thrifty family to use up its savings. Similarly, a man who has over a lifetime of work acquired his own home may be required to surrender title to it if he can't get by without public assistance in his old age.

It is true that there remains the incentive to escape public assistance entirely, and, since the welfare standard of life is a meager one at best, this incentive may seem substantial. But to many welfare households, especially the broken homes, it is too big a jump to be a realistic aspiration. Unattainable goals may be demoralizing rather than motivating. Most welfare dependents cannot set their sights higher than part-time low-paid employment. Yet this may be extremely important, both to acquire work experience and rudimentary skill and to build up the family's morale and sense of achievement. The system is rigged against it; there is nothing in it for them.

The welfare system of the United States contains plenty of ironies. A nation which regards the integrity of the nuclear family as the very backbone of its social structure provides incentives for its dissolution. A society which views high marginal income tax rates as fatal to the incentives for effort and thrift essential to its economy imposes 100% rates on a large fraction of its population. The explanation of such bizarre behavior is probably that present welfare policies represent an uneasy compromise among several principles. Since the thirties our society has acknowledged its responsibility to assure through government a minimal standard of living for all citizens. But the corollary charge on the public purse has been accepted grudgingly, and the fear that the "privilege" of welfare might be abused has dominated policy.

A by-product of this dominant fear is that much of the considerable administrative effort in public welfare reduces to detective work, to make sure there are no "cheaters" on the rolls, and to close surveillance of the clients' sources and uses of funds, to make sure that

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tax money is not wasted in riotous living. Everything confirms welfare families in the demoralizing belief that they cannot manage their own affairs. This tendency is reenforced by the propensity of legislators to give assistance in kind – surplus foods, subsidized housing, medical care for the indigent or "medically indigent." Eligibility for these specific benefits is usually defined by a maximum income limit, awkward to administer and perverse in incentive effects.

## III

An alternative approach, which commands the support of many economists of all political and ideological shades (Milton Friedman, Goldwater's chief economic advisor in 1964, was one of the first to suggest it) is a national system of income supplements graduated to income and to family size. For more fortunate citizens, personal income taxes likewise depend on income and family size; therefore the proposed income supplements can be called, not very felicitously, negative income taxes. They may also be regarded as Federally guaranteed incomes, since they involve, among other things, Federal payment of a specified amount to every family with zero income.

Various proposals embodying one or more of these features have been set forth; and, as with all reform causes, the proponents differ widely in their reasons. Some – like Robert Theobald and W. H. Ferry of Robert Maynard Hutchins' Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions – are interested mainly in the income guarantee. They believe that automation is rendering work for pay obsolete, and that government handouts are the only way to give the public the means to buy the immense bounty produced by the automatons. They do not share, therefore, the concern of economists to provide incentives for work and for building up earning capacity. I disagree strongly with their diagnosis, but for other reasons I also advocate what amounts to an income guarantee.

The personal income tax would become a two-way street. At present, calculations of the tax form lead to two alternative outcomes: either the citizen owes something or he owes nothing. Under the proposal there would be a third possibility: the government owes him something. This would not carry the stigma of charity or relief; it would be a right of national citizenship symmetrical to the obligation to pay taxes. It would be uniform across the nation. A poor family would not suffer because of residence in a poor or unresponsive state or county, or because of migration. The government payment would not depend on the supposed causes of need (absence or disability of the husband, etc.) but simply on the fact of need as scaled to family income and size. Finally, the graduation of the "negative tax" to the family's income would, like that of the existing positive tax, give the family an incentive to earn more on its own.

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For illustration, consider the following scheme: The Internal Revenue Service pays the "taxpayer" $400 per member of his family if the family has no income. This allowance is reduced by 33⅓ cents for every dollar the family earns; the incentive is that the family improves its situation by two-thirds of every dollar it earns. At an income of $1200 per person the allowance becomes zero. Above that income, the family pays taxes, still at the rate of ⅓ on each additional dollar. At some higher income its tax liability so computed becomes the same as it is now, and beyond that point the present tax schedule applies.

The impact of the proposal is exemplified for a married couple with three children in Table 1. The first two columns show how the present tax schedule treats the family. They assume that the family qualifies only for the standard deduction. The last two columns show how the proposed integrated schedule of allowances and taxes would treat the same family. The middle columns superimpose on the present tax law hypothetical public assistance, designed to see that the family has $2500 and administered by a strict means test. The proposed improvement in the incentive to the family to earn income on its own (to move down in the table) is clear from comparing columns (5) and (7).

Similar tables would apply to families of other sizes. It may not be desirable, however, to apply the basic formula of $400 per capita across the board. Instead, a financial incentive to limit family size could be built in by diminishing and perhaps eliminating the extra amount allowed for an additional child when the size of the family is already large. This would make sense if, and only if, the government simultaneously were making sure that birth control information and technique are widely disseminated.

In the design of an integrated allowance and tax schedule a compromise must be struck among three objectives: (a) providing a high basic allowance for families with little or no earnings, (b) building in a strong incentive to earn more, and (c) limiting the budgetary cost of the scheme, and in particular minimizing the payment of benefits to those who do not need them. For example, in Table 1 the initial allowance might be raised to $3000. But if the 33⅓% "tax rate" were retained for incentive reasons, all the entries in columns (6) and (7) would be increased algebraically by $1000 (the last one only approximately so), and the table would have to be considerably lengthened to cover all the beneficiaries of the proposal. Obviously the government would be paying sizable benefits to families who do not need them. This implication of a $3000 initial allowance could be escaped by raising the new "tax rate" to 50%; the break-even income level, at which there is no tax positive or negative, would remain $6000. But the right to retain half of one's own earnings is a less powerful incentive than retention of two-thirds.

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## TABLE 1.

### ILLUSTRATION OF IMPACT OF PROPOSED INCOME ALLOWANCES: MARRIED COUPLE WITH THREE CHILDREN

| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family Income before Federal Tax or Allowance | Present Tax Schedule | | Present Tax Schedule with Public Assistance | | Proposed Schedule | |
| | Tax (−) | Income After Tax | Tax (−) or Assistance (+) | Income After Tax or Assistance | Tax (−) or Allowance (+) | Income After Tax or Allowance |
| $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ + 2500 | $ 2500 | $ + 2000 | $ 2000 |
| 1000 | 0 | 1000 | + 1500 | 2500 | + 1667 | 2667 |
| 2000 | 0 | 2000 | + 500 | 2500 | + 1333 | 3333 |
| 2500 | 0 | 2500 | 0 | 2500 | + 1167 | 3667 |
| 3000 | 0 | 3000 | 0 | 3000 | + 1000 | 4000 |
| 3700 | 0 | 3700 | 0 | 3700 | + 767 | 4467 |
| 4000 | − 42 | 3958 | − 42 | 3958 | + 667 | 4667 |
| 5000 | − 185 | 4815 | − 185 | 4815 | + 333 | 5333 |
| 6000 | − 338 | 5662 | − 338 | 5662 | 0 | 6000 |
| 7000 | − 501 | 6499 | − 501 | 6499 | − 333 | 6667 |
| *7963 | − 654 | 7309 | − 654 | 7309 | − 654 | 7309 |
| 8000 | − 658 | 7342 | − 658 | 7342 | − 658 | 7342 |

*Income level at which the present and proposed methods of calculating tax coincide; above this income the present tax schedule applies.



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I do not contend that the particular compromise struck in my illustrative proposal is optimal. But in discussing alternatives it is essential to keep in mind that some compromise is necessary, that there are inexorable conflicts among the three listed objectives.

### Meshing with other benefits

This is not the place to discuss technical details of administration and enforcement. The difficulties, though considerable, do not differ in kind from those which already beset the Internal Revenue Service. It would be necessary, of course, to permit families to claim allowances currently and to receive them in monthly installments. However, if a family over-estimates the allowance to which it is entitled, April 15 of the following year would be a day of reckoning, just as it is now for taxpayers who pay by withholding and quarterly declarations too little in advance. Similarly, a family which understates currently the allowance to which it is entitled could claim a final payment from the government, like an income tax refund, on April 15.

How would the plan mesh with other governmental income transfer programs? Of these the most important is OASDI, and my recommendation is very simple. OASDI beneficiaries should not be eligible for income allowances but subject, as they are now, to the regular tax code. Let the minimum benefits under OASDI be made at least equal to the new allowances, and let the permitted retention of earnings be at least as liberal. (Now, OASDI beneficiaries under 72 lose 50 cents in benefits for every dollar they earn between $1500 and $2700 a year, and lose a dollar in benefits for every dollar they earn in excess of $2700.) With these reforms and with its coverage becoming more and more complete, OASDI, a going program of proven merit, could handle almost all the income problems of the aged.

Other governmental transfers (veterans' pensions, unemployment compensation, scholarships) provide incomes on bases other than need. Although these receipts are tax exempt, they should be counted as income in determining entitlement to allowances or tax reductions. (The same treatment is indicated for some other tax-exempt receipts, e.g. interest on state and municipal bonds and possibly unrealized capital gains. Otherwise millionaires might be eligible for income allowances!)

As for welfare and relief payments, the allowance plan is designed to supplant them. But there will still be cases where special supplementary assistance is needed, especially at first. Clearly such assistance should not affect entitlement to allowances, and if possible it should be given in a way which preserves the incentives of the allowance plan.

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Housing and medical care are difficult special cases. On housing, present policy, timidly executed though it is, makes publicly owned or subsidized housing available at below-market rents, and rations the inadequate supply by income limitations and other eligibility requirements. Selecting tenants on this basis gives them the wrong incentives and fills housing projects with the hardest problem cases. Better to set rents high enough so that income limits and other rationing devices are not needed, and to make sure that people have enough income to pay such rents. Meanwhile, let the government seek to pull down urban rents by acquiring and building more units to throw on the non-discriminatory rental market, and by fighting discrimination in private contracts.

Sooner or later the country will decide what medical services should be tax financed and available free or at nominal charges to all citizens, on the model of public education, and what services should be paid for by the patient whether from government or private insurance or otherwise. The present makeshift arrangements will surely not endure. It is not really just or even feasible to charge patient A full cost and patient B nothing for the same hospital and surgical care, when A is a few dollars beyond some income cut-off, and B only a few dollars short of it. Neither is it feasible to set the fees in every case on an *ad hoc* basis. Hospitals and doctors should not have to be in the business of deciding who can afford what. Neither should they be in the business of redistributing income from the sick rich to the sick poor. Income redistribution is properly a job for Congress (which can reach the healthy rich, too.) A better way to handle the problem is (a) to make sure that adequate insurance coverage, either from government or from private insurers, is universally available for purchase, (b) to require of everyone evidence of such coverage, or of equivalent financial provision for medical contingencies (just as automobile owners must prove financial responsibility), and (c) to provide sufficient income to the indigent to enable them to purchase the required insurance coverage.

These reforms would require substantially more generous general income subsidies than suggested above, to replace the specific subsidies now given so inefficiently for the housing and medical care of the poor. But the appearance of added cost is only one of the many obstacles to these reforms. Meanwhile we can transform public assistance into income allowances, understanding that cash allowances will continue to be supplemented by specific subsidies of housing and medical care.

### Where will the money come from?

The illustrative proposal sketched above would reduce the net take of the Federal income tax by roughly $12-15 billion a year.

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Against this cost must be set the eventual savings of a large part of the $5½ billion a year now spent by Federal, state, and local governments for categorical public assistance. How would the cost be met?

From an overall economic point of view, there is no cost to the nation. This is a redistribution of income and consumption, not a governmental draft on productive resources such as is involved in building missiles or schools. But a burden nonetheless falls on those whose taxes are higher than they would be otherwise. It will doubtless be easier for them to accept the plan if the cost to them is a tax rate reduction foregone rather than an actual boost in rates.

Politically and fiscally the time is not opportune now, when the build-up in Vietnam is straining both the budget and the economy. Later, however, the $5-7 billion by which economic growth increases each year the yield of Federal taxes may again prove, as it did in 1960-63, a drag on the economy. When that time comes, let us not repeat the great tax rate reduction of 1964-65, but instead concentrate the benefits on those whose need is greatest. It is not too early for the government, aided by public discussion, to work out the details of an income allowance scheme and to give it high priority among legislative and fiscal agenda.

An income allowance plan of this design in no way conflicts with the structural measures of the war on poverty. Indeed, people on welfare would have more, not less, incentive to enroll in training and apprenticeship programs. They will keep more of what they are paid while training, and more of what they subsequently earn. After financial detective work is turned over to the experts of the Internal Revenue Service, social workers can concentrate on their proper professional specialties, family guidance and rehabilitation. The crucial substantive needs in the public sector — for Headstart classes, community schools, clinics, hospitals, day care centers, etc. — must be attacked by other means. But a new distributive strategy can make its beneficiaries better able and better motivated to take advantage of improved public services.

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# Are we a nation of cities?

DANIEL J. ELAZAR

It is generally agreed that the United States is now "a nation of cities," – to use a phrase popularized by Lyndon B. Johnson – and that this has given rise to a unique and dramatic "urban problem." When a proposition of this kind receives general assent, however, it may be just the right moment to look at it critically and skeptically.

The difficulty of understanding the "cities problem" in America is heightened by the existence of numerous mythical assessments of urban reality; particularly since the prevalent urban myths have given rise to all sorts of mythical models for urban improvement. Perhaps the central myth is the one that adheres to the very notion of "a nation of cities" – a notion which conjures up a vision of nearly 200 million Americans living shoulder to shoulder along crowded streets, seeking their pleasures in theatres or poolrooms and suffering the pains of living under conditions of heavy congestion. The foundation of this central myth is the "fact" that over 70 percent of all Americans now live in urban places. This "fact," however, must be considered in the context of the United States Census Bureau's definition of "urban place": any settlement of 2,500 population or more. Only when cities are thus defined, is the United States a nation of cities. But, of course, a town of 2,500 – or even 25,000 – is not likely to conform to the foregoing vision which most of us share when we speak of cities.

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The 1960 population distribution by city size reveals that 58.3 *percent of the nation's total population lived in rural areas or in cities of under 50,000 people (which means approximately 15,000 families)* – and that only 9.8 percent lived in cities of over one million population. Of the more than 6,000 legally constituted cities in the nation, only five have a population of over one million, and only 51 have populations of over 250,000.

Furthermore, while the rural population has continued its decline, *the percentage of population in urban places of less than 50,000 has actually increased by 50 percent since 1920. In the same period, the percentage of the national population living in cities of over 500,000 barely increased at all.* At least since 1920, the class of cities with the largest single segment of the nation's urban population (and it is also the fastest growing segment) has been that of the 10,000 to 50,000 group. Most Americans would agree that cities of that size hardly deserve to be considered cities at all, in common-sense usage.

Proponents of the current myths may argue that most small city growth has taken place within the nation's metropolitan areas. While they are technically correct, they are wrong to assume that "the metropolitan area" is just some kind of bigger city, lacking only a single government to formalize reality. The independent suburban townships and smaller cities exist for real reasons, not by historical accident. In fact, the larger the metropolitan area, the more likely the small cities within it are to value their autonomy and their separate identities. Moreover, while the rise of small cities originally created the contemporary metropolitan pattern, their continued growth – together with the stagnation of the central city – is now working to replace that pattern with one which dilutes the supposed "extended city" character of metropolitanism, replacing it with a pattern of extended urban settlement based on a whole ménage of cities of varying sizes and degrees of inter-relationship.

The non-urban character (in common-sense usage) of American urban settlement (in Census Bureau usage), even in metropolitan areas, is shown in the relatively low density of population in the "nation of cities." The accepted minimum measure of an urban environment is a population density of 1,000 or more per square mile; the measure of suburbanization is a population density of 500 per square mile. *Seventeen states do not have even one county – not a single county – with a population density of 500 per square mile.* Only five of the small Northeastern states have more than 30 per cent of their counties in the suburban-density category. Less than half the states – 24 to be exact – have even one county with an urban-density of 1,000 or more. *Population density in the Northeastern "megalopolis" exceeds the suburbanization level only in the biggest cities.* Further-

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more, three-fourths of all Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas contain fewer than 500,000 people, *even when central cities and suburbs are combined.* This usually means that the central city population is less than 250,000, and may even be less than 100,000. In short, what is developing in the United States is the spread of a relatively low-density population engaged in urban economic pursuits; many of these American-style city dwellers actually live on plots of land that would look large to a Chinese or Indian farmer.

American urban living is further complicated by the vast difference in the life-styles of residents of American cities, depending on each city's size and location. It should not be difficult to visualize the differences between cities of 20,000 on the fringes of Boston and those of the same population in the heart of the Rockies, between a Philadelphia of two million people in the shadow of New York and a Denver of half a million which serves as the "capital" of a region that ranges five hundred or more miles in any direction. Yet the picture of urbanized American that is implicit in most contemporary discussion depicts all urbanized Americans as living in the same kind of environment and facing the same, or at least very similar, problems. Thus, the national news media convey pictures of traffic jams in New York and talk about the American city being crushed by the automobile. This may be as true of New Rochelle (pop. 77,000) as it is of Manhattan, but is is hardly true of Minneapolis or even Philadelphia, where rush-hour delays hardly add fifteen minutes to the total travel time of motorists who drive to the peripheries of the commuting belt. The media show pictures of miles of slum or small tract houses on both sides of the Hudson River and complain that the American urban population is miserably housed and has destroyed its open spaces. These may become problems in Atlanta or Los Angeles, but neither slums nor sprawl have hindered a very comfortable life style in either place as yet. The media show pictures of violent crime in the nation's capital and describe the American city as a place where people cannot go out on the streets after dark. While the crime rate is rising in most parts of the country, in Peoria or Indianapolis women still consider the streets sufficiently safe for evening movement. Whatever the national spread of traffic jams, water pollution, and violent crime – and these problems are certainly present nationwide – any well-traveled person can vouch for the differences in magnitude of all three from community to community and from region to region, differences which reflect different meanings of "urbanization" from place to place.

### Mythical problems, mythical solutions

On a slightly different plane, American cities are typified in the contemporary mythology as places where people wish to live anony-

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mously, and where they make every effort to seek the variegated activities cities are supposed to offer. From this, one is led to draw a picture of an urbanized population that is also urbane, except insofar as its urbanity is frustrated by the "crisis of the city." Thus, according to the myth, we face a newly urbane population frustrated because it cannot easily get to the concert halls, the art museums, and the theaters; a population that is forced, against its will, to live in sprawling suburbs; forced to depend upon the family automobile; forced to maintain lawns, raise flowers, and rake leaves. The *Life* double-issue of December, 1965, devoted to "The City," provides the most recent comprehensive example of this myth, presented in its most universally accepted form.

An honest look at the evidence belies this whole picture for all but a small portion of the urban population, located in a few of the largest cities. Wherever the choice has been offered, Americans have worked to cultivate their identities among neighbors, whether through "togetherness" or through neighborhood associations; have sought activities that are by no means citified in character, whether through "Little Leagues" and "do it yourself activities" or through outdoor barbecues and camping; and have clearly sought the suburban conditions of living with lawns and automobiles – often within the great cities themselves. Philadelphia, for example, in the heart of the great eastern megalopolis, boasts that 70 percent of its dwellings are owner-occupied and that there are over 6 million trees within its limits – an average of three per person.

This composite of myths about American urban reality has led to the conclusion that our cities have failed us and that we face an urban crisis. This, in turn, has led to the development of certain models for urban improvement which are based on another set of myths, derived from the classic European stereotype of the city, either directly or as translated into modern terms by social scientists. The most obvious of these is the notion that fragmentation of governmental responses to the urban situation represents a frustration of the will of the people. This argument is used whether the critics of the present situation speak of fragmentation of programs or fragmentation of governmental jurisdictions. Their position is that "rational consolidation" of these programs and jurisdictions will solve the urban problem.

see Wilson's "War on Cities"

Below the surface of the "fragmentation" argument, however, lies a particular kind of commitment as to the direction in which the American city should develop. Most of those who articulate such solutions for urban problems start with the hidden assumption that there is a public interest in favor of the radical "citification" of the United States, i.e., that the people would like nothing better than to make their cities modern versions of Florence or Rome or Paris, and that

assumption of consolidation argument

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they are frustrated in their efforts to do so by fragmentation, by tradition, or by the politicians.

But there is a great deal of evidence to indicate that most of the models of improvement proposed for the American city are nothing more than projections of the desires of certain articulate minorities in American society today. Whatever the dissatisfactions that stir the American people regarding the urbanized world in which they live, they are not the dissatisfactions pointed to by the spokesmen for "the city in crisis." Traffic jams and urban sprawl are not high on the agenda of complaints of the American people – because those are not great problems to most of the people who are defined as "urban dwellers" in the United States today. The blighting of old neighborhoods does not appear to concern the overwhelming majority of Americans, most of whom have never seen a slum. Governmental fragmentation has been ratified time and again when the issue has been presented to the voters; and, indeed, support for fragmentation of one kind or another is so great that the issue has rarely reached the stage of formal voting.

rural qualities into the city

Whatever changes the American people seem to be seeking, they are not directed toward the enhancement of the facilities that lead to an urbane or citified life, but rather to the introduction into the city of qualities associated with the rural life – whether trees, cleaner air and water, larger parks, or new family-style dwellings to reduce the overall density of population. The most recent Gallup Poll on the subject, published in March, 1966, shows that only 22 percent of the American people desire to live in cities, while 49 percent would prefer to live in small towns or on farms, with the remainder (28 percent) opting for the suburbs, probably as a small-town surrogate. This attitude of wistful longing for the rural life is fully as prevalent among younger adults (ages 21-29) as among their elders. (In contrast, two out of three Negroes say they would live in a city or suburban area, if they could live anywhere they chose.) No doubt this response also reflects a mythology – but it is a mythology that must be considered when we seek to understand American attitudes toward the city. The historical record confirms this American desire to gain the economic benefits of urbanization while resisting the way of life usually associated with living in cities. It might be said that the American people persist in maintaining an implicit distinction between urbanization and citification, willingly accepting the former while seeking to avoid the latter.

conclusion

### The three factors affecting American cities

In understanding the reasons for the rejection of citification we can understand the real character of the American city and of the "American way of urbanization." *The American urban place is pre-*

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*eminently an "anti-city,"* implicitly developed to reflect a basic American life-style which has repeatedly emphasized agrarian elements from the days of the first colonists to our own. The underlying character of the American urban place is shaped by three basic phenomena: agrarianism, metropolitanism, and nomadism.

## Agrarianism

Since the nation's founding, American values have been rooted in a vision of a commonwealth that supports and encourages the agrarian virtues of individual self-reliance and family solidarity, within a cooperating community of freeholding property-owners where class distinctions are minimal. This agrarian ideal has held the qualities of urbanity, sophistication, and cosmopolitanism to be seriously suspect, despite their undeniable attractiveness.

Nobody conversant with American history need be reminded of the rural roots of American civilization. Articulate Americans consistently viewed the rural life as the good life, or, indeed, the best life, where the vices inherent in man by virtue of Adam's fall would be least likely to flourish. Until the middle of the 19th century, this doctrinal position was reinforced by an agrarian economic system and a pattern of political organization that rested on individual agricultural freeholders. Furthermore, social equality – always a basic, if abstract, element in the American ideal system – found its closest approximation in the middle-class agricultural society of early America (at least in the North and West), a fact which was not lost upon those who seriously concerned themselves with the problems of creating the good society.

From an ideology which looked upon rural living (either in separated farms or in agricultural villages) as the best way to limit individual sin, the agrarian doctrine was translated into positive terms to become part of the world view of the 18th-century enlightenment. Thomas Jefferson, the best-known spokesman for positive agrarianism, articulated the new view as one which saw the agrarian life as the life best suited to bringing out the natural virtues of individual men and most likely to prevent the social evils always possible in society. The city was seen as the source of social corruption even more than individual corruption; the city was to be avoided as a source of inequality, class distinction, and social disorganization that could lead to tyranny in one form or another.

Both the positive and the negative views of "agrarian virtue" versus "urban corruption" became part of the mainstream of American thought, articulated by intellectuals from Thoreau to Frank Lloyd Wright, and made the basis of political movements from Jeffersonian Democracy, through Populism and the New Deal, to the "new conservatism" of the 1960's. The city was and continues to be viewed by

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many as a breeder of crime, corruption, social disorganization, and *anomie,* not really fit to be lived in, even when valuable for its economic utility. While it is now fashionable in many quarters to attack this kind of thinking as a ridiculously naive relic of the nation's unsophisticated past, there is at least enough probable truth in many of its conclusions to give those who do not otherwise wish to foster citification ample justification for their position.

### Agrarian ideals in urban settings

Even when the agrarian myth was in full flower, Americans had begun to flock to the cities, primarily to gain economic advantage; and the cities had become the pace-setters in American life. But, while they desired to gain economically and socially by exploiting the benefits of urban concentration, the new city-dwellers rejected the classically urban styles of living (as developed in Old World cities). Accepting the necessity and even the value of urbanization for certain purposes, in particular, economic ones, Americans have characteristically tried to have their cake and eat it, too, by bringing the old agrarian ideals into the urban setting and by reinterpreting them through the establishment of a modified pattern of "rural"-style living within an urban context. The result has been the conversion of *urban* settlements into *metropolitan* ones, whose very expansiveness provides the physical means for combining something like rural and urban life-styles into a new pattern which better suits the American taste. It was hoped that this pattern would combine the advantages of an urban environment with the maintenance of the essence of the traditional American "agrarian" virtues and pleasures, to preserve as much as possible of what is conceived to be the traditional "American way of life."

As part of this effort, sets of institutions and symbolic actions have been developed, partially by design, which are meant to evoke rural and small-town America and its traditional way of life. Limited and fragmented local government is one of these. The creation of many smaller cities — the *bête noire* of most professional city-planners — in place of a single large metropolis reflects this desire for maintenance of the small community, both as an abstract principle and in order to control such crucial local functions as zoning and police, which in a direct or derivative sense embody the traditions of local control. We see this in the continued emphasis on political autonomy for suburban communities, and in their resistance to any efforts, real or imagined, to absorb them into the political sphere of the central city.

Moreover, in many parts of the nation there is a hesitancy among suburbanites to use government for local services, for fear that the addition of more local services will increase the urban character of

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the environment. Even in the fringe areas of cities, large numbers of people resist sidewalks because sidewalks represent "the city." Street lights are often frowned upon, sewer systems resisted, and the maintenance of the neighborhood school is an article of faith, all for the same reasons.

different reasons here too!

It is generally known by now that suburbia has become the equal of small-town America as the symbol of the country's "grass-roots" and as the fountainhead of what is distinctive about "the American way of life." This is so regardless of whether suburbia is praised or condemned for its role. (The Chicago *Tribune*, traditional champion of the agrarian virtues as it perceives them, now features suburban settings for its "rural virtue" cartoons.) The popular literature defending suburbia and that attacking it are both strongly reminiscent of the popular literature devoted to small-town America two to four generations ago. If some see virtue in the small community – whether it is typified by a predominantly small-town society or a predominantly suburban society – others see ignorance, provincialism, decadence, and even corruption in the same locale. If the latter speak loudly with words, the former are speaking louder with their feet.

Yet another manifestation of neo-agrarianism is the physical structure characteristic of American cities. The American city sharply separates its commercial and residential areas, creating a "town and country" pattern within its boundaries. Outside of its central core, it emphasizes low-density construction set along wide, easily accessible, tree-lined streets that fade into the countryside without sharp distinctions. At its best, the American urban place further reflects an effort to merge city and country through the development of large, unmanicured public parks which thrust the country into the city and which, in turn, merge into private lawns to further that penetration by creating an overall natural setting that is not subordinated to the buildings. Still another manifestation of Americans' agragrian outlook is the continued emphasis on home ownership, and the complex of activities and symbols which surround it. Owner-occupied, free-standing homes, each with its lawn and garden, represent a major voluntary expenditure of energy and resources in contemporary American society. Virtually every American urban area embodies these neo-agrarian features in some way. Outstanding examples in every section easily come to mind: the greater part of Connecticut in the Northeast, Miami and Nashville in the South, Cleveland and St. Paul in the Middle West, Denver and Seattle in the Far West, to name only a few of the largest and best.

### A home is a house

While urbanization and metropolitanization in other nations have led to the development of official policies to encourage high-

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density living, federal, state, and even local policies (other than the property tax) in the United States are heavily weighted in favor of the homeowner and low-density development. Mortgage guarantees, home financing funds, homestead exemptions, zoning regulations, and many other specific devices have been enacted into law to encourage widespread home ownership. The foundations for today's widespread home ownership were laid during the 1930's by the New Deal, as part of the New Dealers' over-all efforts to translate the ideals and values of traditional American agrarianism into terms appropriate to the new urban setting. The percentage of owner-occupied homes has been increasing rapidly since 1940, when only 43.6 percent of the nation's housing units were owner-occupied. By 1950, 55 percent were owner-occupied, a figure which rose to 61.9 percent by 1960. This figure compares well with the 64.4 percent of owner-occupied *farm* housing units in 1900.

The trend to owner-occupied housing has revived such symbolically rural occupations as gardening and "do-it-yourself" home maintenance. The public response to these activities – state and county fairs (not to mention home and garden shows) outdraw art galleries in annual attendance *even in the largest cities,* and the greater share of adult education courses deal with home-related activities – indicates that they are, in effect, an urban recrudescence of a significant "vernacular" cultural tradition long associated with rural and small-town life. The importance of this vernacular tradition in American life is generally overlooked in discussions of American culture since those who are generally deemed to be the custodians of the civilized arts in this country tend to be products of the more urbane traditions of Western civilization which originated in Europe.

Similarly, the impact that private maintenance of lawns and gardens has on the maintenance of the aesthetic qualities of American urban areas has generally been ignored by students of urbanization. In the days of "Great Society" beautification programs it would serve us well to recall that the private expenditure for lawn and garden maintenance far exceeds the public expenditures for parks, tree plantings, and similar efforts at urban beautification. It represents an important contribution to the "public good" that would be prohibitively expensive if charged against the public purse and sorely missed if eliminated.

The near-universal American concern with promoting home ownership as the solution to the problems of urbanization and metropolitanization is in itself a strong reflection of the strength of underlying agrarian ideals. Except for New York and Chicago, apartment living remains the domain of unmarried young adults, newly-married couples, and the retired. The recent spurt in apartment construction is apparently designed to meet the needs of those groups rather than

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to replace the single-family home. Curiously enough, much of the so-called apartment "boom" is a suburban phenomenon, one which is reinforcing the developing self-sufficiency of the suburbs by providing indigenous housing for those who are likely to live in apartments, thus helping to transform many suburbs from dormitories for the central city into smaller but self-sufficient cities (American-style) in their own right.

## Metropolitanism

Excepting only the 19th-century factory towns, founded specifically to bring together enough population to serve industry, the American city was not created for its own sake or to be internally self-contained, but to serve as the center of a larger area – a hinterland tributary to it in some way. From the first, the American city was really part of a larger geographic entity rather than a self-centered community, even in its economic purposes. In contrast, the great cities of Europe, though each may be the metropolis of its particular country, have always offered their residents a self-contained way of life, one that is separated from that of the rest of the country in profound ways. In the United States, this is not true even of New York. The only American cities that even approach such a self-centered separation are San Francisco and New Orleans. In America, cities have thrived only by cultivating their hinterlands, whether it is New York serving as the nation's empire city, Minneapolis playing an imperial role in the Northwest, Pasadena serving the San Gabriel Valley in California, or Charlottesville serving its metropolitan region in central Virginia.

Metropolitanism of settlement, as well as metropolitanism of commerce, began with the very birth of cities in the United States. Urbanization and suburbanization went hand in hand. Even as the rate of urban growth began to accelerate after the War of 1812, a counter, almost anti-urban, trend began to develop alongside it. As fast as some Americans moved to the city, others who were able to do so moved out, while maintaining their ties with it. The process of suburbanization can be traced throughout the 19th century. After 1820, the nation's largest cities, such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans, began to experience an outmigration to newly created suburban areas. Though most of these early suburbs were later annexed by their central cities, the suburbanization process continued after each set of annexations, gaining new impetus as new means of transportation were developed and made possible movement out of the city for people who worked in the city. First the railroad, then the electric trolley, and finally the automobile stimulated suburbanization past the "horse and buggy" stage.

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By 1920, over half the nation lived in "urban places," and nearly a third lived in cities of over 100,000. However, no sooner did the big city become the apparent embodiment of the American style of life, than it began to be replaced by a less citified style in turn. *The upward trend in the growth of big cities came to an end during the depression*, then gave way to the development of medium- and smaller-size cities on the fringes of the big cities themselves. The decline of the big cities began when the problems of population density and congestion seriously cut into the possibilities for maintaining an agrarian-influenced life style within them. So long as city life was able to offer most of the amenities of rural-style living as well as the economic, social, and cultural advantages of the city to those who were in a position to determine the cities' growth, the expansion of cities as cities continued. Newly-settled suburbs and smaller cities were annexed to already large cities because their residents, or at least those who made the decisions locally, felt reasonably confident that their suburban style of life would be maintained, even within the city limits. When this became no longer possible, metropolitanism then became firmly fixed as suburbanization, with the semi-city becoming more important than the city as the locus of growth in area after area.

## Nomadism

This trend is additionally encouraged by the penchant toward nomadism which has always characterized Americans. With a population that is so highly mobile that one family in five moves every year, the older European notion of the city as a stable, self-perpetuating community could not apply in the New World. This penchant has been characteristic of Americans from the very first; *the actual percentage of families that have migrated from one state to another has not changed appreciably in the last century.* Consequently, the city, like every other local governmental subdivision, has become a politically defined entity populated to a great extent by different groups in every generation, with a relatively low level of continuity among groups from one generation to another.

This, in turn, significantly alters the meaning of moving from farm to city, and from central city to suburb, in the United States. In other countries, the great move from a fixed rural location to a fixed urban one has represented a major uprooting that is unique in the life experience of each family, perhaps for generations. In the United States the similar movement, for most people and their families, has been no more than one of a continual series that originally propelled European immigrants across the seas; then, as Americans, westward and into cities; and now from city to suburb or city to city.

The emergence of the "megalopolis" is a perfect reflection of the

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new nomadism. People escaping the cities of the Eastern seaboard, and now the cities of the interior and West Coast as well, settled first in the interstices between them wherever possible, first forming the traditional suburban circle and then a more or less continuous belt of urban-related settlement as the circles merged and overlapped. Now they have begun to move from place to place within each belt or its segments, preserving a nomadic way of life that is urban without being permanently attached to any particular city, or even to citified living. Traditionally these migrating Americans have been brought into the political realm as individuals through the possibilities of involvement in local communities, thus preventing them from becoming members of an anomic mass.

### The revival of the Biblical city

The American urban place, then, is a very different phenomenon from the city which is usually used for the model against which it is measured. The classic city is a product of Greece and Rome, of medieval and modern Europe. This is the city of the *civitas,* the city which was the center of the political order of the ancient European world and the focal point for the founding of modern republicanism in later European experience. The exemplars of this classic city – Athens, Rome, Florence, Hamburg, Paris – remain today the symbols of urbanity, cosmopolitanism, and sophistication. They became the centers of their world to the point that people not involved with them were excluded from a share in the inner life of that world. Within their respective worlds, they brooked no competition. Men were citizens of those cities until the rise of the nation-state and, for many men, national ties have become synonymous with ties to the central city of their nation. In such cities, the city government was generally equivalent to the central government. That is to say, it was a national as well as a local government. As such, it was internally centralized as well, with all local functions concentrated under the leadership of the general governing body.

The American city, on the other hand, has its classic antecedent in the pattern of Israelite city-building described in the Bible, as befits the cities of an agrarian republic produced by the heirs of the Bible-inspired Reformation. Like the cities of ancient Israel, the American city is located within territorial political jurisdictions that take precedence over it – in its case, the state rather than the tribe, and in both cases, the nation above that. Thus, the city in this country, as in ancient Israel, developed not as the equivalent of the State, but to serve certain functions for an existing civil society which could best be served by bringing men together in relatively dense population groups where they could interact socially and commercially.

Three particular elements in the general structure of the Ameri-

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can city bring it into close parallel with its Biblical predecessor. Unlike the Classical city, which, in effect, first established its limits, and then developed its various functions within those limits, the American and Biblical cities grew almost haphazardly from a central point, the "tower" in Biblical parlance. In the ancient Biblical city, the tower was often a fortress, a temple, or perhaps a granary which attracted people who did not seek the city *per se*, but settled around it to make use of the special facilities it offered. In the United States, the equivalent was often the governmental center for the local territorial jurisdiction; the city hall, or, more frequently, the county courthouse. Sometimes it was the general-store-post-office combination or railroad station which centralized communications with the outside world. More recently, Americans have regarded the skyscraper, which rises from the midst of low density settlement, to be a very real power as a new focal point for the city. In each and every case, the city grew around some function which touched the lives of all the residents of the city and served as a focal point for them in some important way.

Unlike the more or less self-contained Classical city, the American and Biblical cities have developed economically through a relationship with their hinterlands in a special pattern of suburbanization which can be considered unique and characteristic. In both cases, the urban center has been surrounded by satellites – villages or cities – that stand in what we would call a metropolitan relationship to the center. Though the relationship between the tower center and its peripheries is a symbiotic one, in both cases the centers are more dependent on their hinterlands than in the European metropolitan tradition. Both the American and Biblical cities were designed to serve an agrarian ideal. This means, in particular, that the life of the city has been subordinated to the values of the society rather than being given a free hand to shape those values along "sophisticated" lines. In the second place, both kinds of cities have served mobile populations; the Biblical city served an agricultural population that migrated with its flocks within the city's hinterland along set patterns, while the American city increasingly serves a population that migrates from center to peripheries and back, or from section to section within the metropolitan area, with the average resident changing location several times during his life.

The particular structural-functional pattern of the classic Biblical-American city has had direct and observable effects on the character of urbanization. Two examples will illustrate this.

A major complaint among professional urbanists today is that marketing has become decentralized – through shopping centers, etc. – because of metropolitanization. Taking their cues from European city patterns, they argue that marketing must be recentralized if the city is to survive. In fact, the decentralization of the marketing

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function is characteristic of the Biblical-American city. Marketing has always been a central function in the classical European city, one with important public elements, because it is preeminently a social act, involving daily give-and-take in a manner conducive to the development of latent functions of sociability as well as the manifest functions of buying and selling. In the Biblical-American city, marketing tends to be much more a private affair, conducted in the most efficient possible way by people who do not use it as a social outlet. Thus, in ancient Israel most marketing was done at the "gates of the city," where farmers could come and meet city people for the purposes of commerce. The contemporary American city, with its shopping centers located in such a way as to attract both suburban and urban people without regard to their relationship to the city's center, is simply a contemporary expression of the same pattern. Americans wish *private* convenience in shopping, first and foremost; hence the failure of downtown enthusiasts to recentralize that function. At best, "downtown" has become another regional shopping center in the metropolis.

Similarly, the common complaint about the lack of centralized government at the local level falls on deaf ears, because it is based on European notions of the city. The political structure and functions of the American and Biblical cities have been markedly distinct from those of the classical cities of Europe. The limited role played by a city that is simply one focal point among many in a larger civil society lends itself both to a reduction in the importance of the city's government and to the possibility of the separation of its governing institutions along functional lines without undue inconvenience.

### The principle of local control

While Americans have an ideological predilection for emphasizing the primacy of local government, in fact they have not hesitated to utilize the powers of government at all levels – federal, state, and local – to secure their political ends. At the same time, they have continued to emphasize the principle of local control over all government activities within the community, regardless of the official point of origin of these activities. What this means is that every local community is inextricably bound up in a three-way partnership with the federal and state government, one in which virtually every activity in which it is involved is shared intergovernmentally. Not only is this true today, but to a significant degree it has always been true, changing only to the extent that the increase in the total velocity of government at all levels has intensified the amount of shared activity.

The existence of this partnership, with its emphasis on the national government's role as stimulator of better public services, coupled with maximum local control over actual implementation of specific pro-

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Wilson complains that this local control over specific programs defeats their purposes often.



grams, has certain consequences that up to now have operated to reinforce the classical patterns of American urbanization. First of all, and most obviously, it reduces the desire of the local people to give up their local autonomy. Within the federal system, all local governments act as acquirers of federal and state aid; as adapters of national or state programs to local conditions, needs, and values; as initiators of new programs at the state and national, as well as the local, level; and as experimenters in the development of new services. Most important, for every local community or communal interest, possession of its own local government gives it a seat in the great game of American politics. Governmental organization is, in effect, a form of "paying the ante" that gives the community as a whole, or the specific interest, access to a political system that is highly amenable to local influence properly managed. Relinquishment of structural autonomy, on the other hand, substantially weakens the position of the community, or interest, in its all-important dealings with the state and federal governments. This militates against any local government – whether the general-purpose government of a city or township or the special-purpose governments such as school, library, or park districts – willingly giving up its existence unless its constituents cease to desire a special seat at the political table.

This basic tendency is reinforced by the role of the states in the federal system. Because the states are able to "run interference" for those of their cities that wish them to do so, they enable the smaller urban places to benefit from the nation's over-all system of local assistance to a degree that would be impossible if those cities had to confront Washington alone. Lacking the expertise or the political influence necessary to capitalize on all the benefits offered by the federal government in its efforts to improve the caliber of public services in the country as a whole, the smaller cities can use the expertise and influence of the state governments and congressional delegations to their advantage.

See Wilson – deplores amounts given not to large trouble areas but small cities.

Of course, the nation's largest cities, the great metropolitan centers, do not feel the need for this kind of service, nor are they willing to pay the various surcharges which the states quite naturally demand for doing the job; hence their desire to obtain federal aid directly. But the suburbs and smaller cities find no particular advantage in sharing the big cities' desire.

The present system also robs the "metropolitan consolidationists" of one of their primary arguments: that the creation of larger, supposedly more viable cities, i.e., ones with metropolitan-wide general governments, will lessen the federal role in local affairs. The entire thrust of American history militates against this idea. Since virtually all governmental activities are invariably shared by all levels of government whether the local levels act energetically or not, restruc-

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turing local government is not likely to alter the federal role in any appreciable way. A metropolitan area is no more likely to be financially and economically self-sufficient than the largest states are today, and we know that no state is presently willing or able to give up federal assistance, particularly since none feels the need to do so to maintain reasonable local autonomy.

What would happen under "metropolitan consolidation" is that the present system – whereby the national administrators can speak for the ostensible interests of the larger public, while the local governments can speak for the most specific interests of the local publics, so that together they can strike a balance – would be replaced by one in which national and local officials would tend to speak for much the same interests, leaving legitimate local interests in a far weaker position in their efforts to be heard. In more than one community, had local consolidation taken effect, there would be fewer owner-occupied homes, tree-lined streets, and locally-responsive schools. Americans are not about to give up any of these.

## Messianism and urbanism

Only the existence of an otherwise unmanageable and authentic urban crisis would lead Americans to seek to alter the present situation, or would persuade those who value the present semi-urban way of life available to most people in this country that they ought to alter their life-style. Most vocal urbanists today argue that such a crisis does indeed exist. But, given the value preferences of the great majority of Americans, that argument seems hollow. As long as Americans prefer private homes to ease of access to work, trees and lawns to easy access to theatres and museums, private shopping to public marketing, and the quiet of the suburbs to the bustle of the city, solution of the problems usually packaged together as "the crisis of the cities" becomes much less important.

This is not to say that there are no important problems generated by the urbanization of the United States. There are indeed great ones which must be tackled – most especially in the dozen or so largest cities. But they do not call for an "overresponse" based on a crisis psychology. Unquestionably the solutions to these urban problems must be pursued by governments at all levels. Since most Americans would very likely argue that, with all its problems, the American pattern of semi-urbanization is the freest and most comfortable yet created, there is every reason to believe that the preservation of that pattern is a desirable goal for the governments of this country to pursue.

In one respect, at least, the idea of "the city in crisis," while generally based on false premises, represents a characteristically American response to problems of the environment. Perceiving some

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real problems in the urban environment, the bulk of the vocal reformers in our midst began to generate steam (for themselves and for others) to meet those problems, first by portraying them in apocalyptic terms, and then by prescribing messianic solutions which not only ignore but denigrate political and social realities. Up to a generation ago, this messianic urge sought to reverse the process of urbanization by returning the American people to the soil. That vision was clearly unattainable even then. Nor was it desired by most Americans. It has given way, in turn, to a vision that calls for the transformation of an urbanized America into a citified one, hallowing the city as the only key to the civilized life, much as the early agrarians hallowed ruralism as the only key to a moral life. This new messianic view is no more likely to be accepted than its predecessor.

It is a mistake to assume that urbanization in America stands apart from the other influential movements uniquely important in the American experience, or that Americans view the proper ends of urbanization apart from their larger view of the proper ends of life — their over-all set of values. Unless urbanization and the responses to it are considered in relation to, if not in the context of, such values as federalism, freedom to make choices about life styles, the agrarian spirit, and the concern for "the American way of life," we fall prey to mythical assessments of urban reality and to the building of mythical models of urban improvement.

In fact, the American urban place is a non-city because Americans wish it to be just that. Our age has been the first in history even to glimpse the possibility of having the economic advantages of the city while rejecting the previously inevitable conditions of citified living, and Americans apparently intend to take full advantage of the opportunity. If we wish to make a realistic approach to our real urban problems, we would be wise to begin with that fact of American life.

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# The search for "brainpower"

GEORGE C. KELLER

In the unpromising year of 1930, President Herbert Hoover called a "White House Conference on Child Health and Protection," the purpose of which was to discuss "for the first time in history" what it called "special education" – classes, schools, and teachers for those who were not ordinary children. Its list of special groups included the blind, the crippled, the deaf, those with speech problems, the mentally retarded, those with health problems (heart trouble, malnutrition, tuberculosis, epilepsy), those with behavior problems (emotionally disturbed and chronic delinquents), and – last on the agenda – gifted children.

Thirty-five years later, in 1964, President Lyndon Johnson established a Presidential Scholars Program for gifted high school youths to recognize, as he put it, "the most precious resource of the United States – the brainpower of its young people." The National Merit Corporation, the National Science Foundation, various state governments, many municipal and suburban school systems, and numerous other agencies now currently display intense interest in cultivating the academically top-notch. Publicists shout about the desperate shortage in the "national supply" of scientists and other intellectuals. To talk about gifted youngsters as if they were simply a special problem group, like the deaf or the emotionally disturbed, is today almost unthinkable.

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Obviously, there has been a remarkable change in the United States during the past thirty-five years in our thinking about the use and the place of intellect in society. But if intellect has suddenly become a major national asset, just what do we know today about identifying and developing "brainpower"?

## From Terman to World War II

In his revealing semi-autobiographical Bingham lecture at Berkeley, Lewis Madison Terman, the Stanford psychologist who pioneered in the study of the gifted, remarked that the prevailing attitude, while he was a graduate student at Clark University, was "early ripe, early rot." He recounts how he began his great study of 1,000 gifted youngsters in 1921 to test the validity of this attitude – "to find out what traits characterize children of high I.Q. and ... to see what kind of adults they become." To the astonishment of the American educational world, and even to his own mild surprise, the first results of Terman's study in 1925 disclosed that the intellectually gifted, for the most part, were far above average in vigor, readiness to work hard, and appreciation of school, slightly above average in health, conduct, and emotional maturity, and not below average in physical skills. They were not oddballs, but fairly normal youngsters. Moreover, as Terman followed his gifted youths through the years, they became, to an amazing degree (70 percent), men who graduated from college and who went on to occupy positions of authority and distinction in society; very few turned out to be "maladjusted." Terman's findings, supported by the work of such men as Columbia's Edward Thorndike, Ohio State's Sidney Pressey, and Leta Hollingworth, were shattering to leading educators, most of whom had unconsciously absorbed the prevailing bourgeois-philistine notion of gifted children.

Earlier, there had been little interest in identifying and nourishing the academically gifted students in the primary and secondary schools. The first recorded experiment with especially able youngsters was the adoption in St. Louis, in 1868, of the "flexible promotion scheme," or "skipping," as it came to be known. In 1918 the National Education Association issued a remarkable report, *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education.* It argued that curricula need not be fixed but could be multi-purpose; that is, special sections of classes or "enriched" courses could be set up for the more talented, instead of "skipping" them out of school at an earlier age. The suggestion was picked up in some places; by 1928, 40 cities in 23 states had classes for gifted children – with a grand total of 4,000 pupils in them.

But the objections to separating the gifted were loud and many. The schools at the time were thought to have three main purposes: to train for business and the professions, to provide a base for political democracy, and to serve as a social melting pot for persons

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of different national origins, religions, and – in the North and West – different skin colors. Special sections or enriched courses for some pupils seemed to serve none of these purposes. On the contrary, it was felt that businessmen and professionals might become more conceited and snobbish and would develop dangerously unbalanced views of life because of a lack of intimacy with average and below-average people in their youth. Democracy, too, would suffer as a result of such "elitism;" and the "Americanization" process would be hurt because many of the natural leaders of the "melting" operation would be absent.

In the 1930's the objectors to special classes, aided by the shortage of money for educational purposes, had their way. There was a widespread abandonment of the relatively few special sections that were in operation, and the mixed classroom – with extra homework for the mentally quick – became the favored pattern. Small special classes, additional aids, and extra efforts were widely established – to help the *least* academically talented and the other problem youngsters to which the Hoover Conference gave attention. In 1940 there were 604 cities in the United States giving special attention to the mentally deficient, but only 36 cities in 1950 reported any special attention to the mentally extraordinary.

### A sudden passion for intellect

The advent of World War II, with its need for experts, changed that order of priorities slightly, but not as much as might be expected. Five years after the war ended, the place of the gifted in the schools was not substantially different from what it had been in 1928.

But in the 1950's there was another startling reversal of social priorities. The nation "discovered" the value of intellect, or "brainpower," as it came to be called. In 1950 the Educational Policies Commission of the N.E.A. issued a statement on "The Education of the Gifted;" in 1951 the National Science Foundation was set up, and the Ford Foundation started a program to get very bright 16-year-olds into college a year earlier; in 1953 the National Manpower Council deplored "the acute shortages among highly skilled professional, scientific, and technical workers needed in defense and essential civilian activities," and the Advanced Placement Program was begun; and in 1954 Dael Wolfe's influential *America's Resources of Specialized Talent,* sponsored by the Commission on Human Resources, studied the "potential supply" of intellect for the polity.

While federal government officials, confronted with the exigencies of a continuing Cold War, hastened to increase the supply of brainpower, the challenges of an increasingly technical and intricately organized economy forced businessmen and economists to re-study their view of the place and value of highly talented individuals in

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economic growth. Although some political economists from Adam Smith to John Stuart Mill and Alfred Marshall had argued the importance of talented persons to a nation's prosperity, most economists – both capitalist and Marxist – have focussed, and still focus, their attention on the relation among *things,* on goods, monies, services. In the late 1950's, a new school of young economists – John Vaizey in England, Gino Martinoli in Italy, Odd Aukrust in Norway, Columbia University's Gary Becker and Chicago's Theodore Schultz in the United States – began to argue that economics makes little sense unless one includes *human capital,* and that economic growth for developed countries and development for poor countries depend chiefly upon that resource, particularly in an industrial-scientific age. As Schultz wrote in *The Social Service Review* in June, 1959:

> Our knowledge about national wealth is almost wholly restricted to the non-human component, that is, to reproducible physical capital and land. The study of human wealth is everywhere neglected notwithstanding its importance and notwithstanding the fact that people all about us are investing in themselves . . . We are strongly inhibited from looking upon men as an investment, except in slavery, and this we abhor . . . A study of man treating him as wealth, runs counter to deeply held values, for it would seem to reduce him once again to a material component, to something akin to property . . . [Yet the U.S. has had since World War I, a rate of economic growth three times as large as the increase of labor and capital. Why?] My hypothesis is that the explanation is to be found in the large and rapid accumulation of human wealth that is being excluded from our conventional measures of "manhours worked" and of "tangible capital." . . . A much more comprehensive concept of capital is required – one that will include human capital.

Schultz contended that the former policy of neglecting to cultivate the gifted needed alteration: "I have little doubt that in recent years we have been allocating altogether too many of our resources to automobiles and roads compared to what we have allocated to education." And he cautioned underdeveloped countries to pay less attention to power facilities, steel mills, or beautiful state capitals and more attention to the training and education of their citizens.

As a result of this and similar attitudes, the United States has increased its investment in schools, colleges, universities, and their personnel from 4 percent of the total "physical capital" in 1900 to over 30 percent in 1965. In 1955, businessmen who had, thirty years ago, scoffed at any attention paid to the gifted, set up the National Merit Corporation to ferret out the nation's most academically tal-

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ented secondary school students and to assure that each of them had the opportunity of a college education.

## The four talents

But what do we know today about identifying and developing the gifted student?

One thing we do know is that it is very difficult to tell who is actually gifted. There are at least four socially useful – as we presently define useful – kinds of talent. To use the categories of J. Ned Bryan, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's specialist for the education of gifted and talented children, they are: academic talent, creative talent, kinesthetic talent (e.g., craftsmanship, athletic ability), and psychosocial talent (e.g., political or social leadership). Talent is not a unitary thing; talent in any one of the four categories has no necessary "spillover effect" in another category, although it is not rare to find youths talented in two or even three categories. (One of the chief causes of tension in college admissions offices at the best colleges currently is the matter of whether a great liberal arts college has an obligation to develop all four kinds of talent or to refine academic talent alone. Which is better for education and for society?)

As an example of the relative discreteness of talent, take the connection between high academic ability and creativity. Leta Hollingworth studied a group of students with an I.Q. above 180 and found that, while one-third of those rare youngsters were highly creative, another third displayed only average creativity, and another third gave no indication whatsoever of originality or innovative outlook. And there are numerous examples of leading artists, writers, musicians, and bold, original thinkers in many fields whose intelligence quotient would not be far above normal. Psychologists at both Berkeley and the University of Utah have demonstrated that above a fairly low cut-off point on *academic* scales – say an I.Q. of 115 or College Board S.A.T. scores above 450 – creativity can blossom. The correlation between high I.Q.s and talent for political or social leadership seems to be even weaker.

Everyone agrees that, of the four human talents, academic talent is the easiest to measure. Yet even here we run into extremely difficult problems. The best indicator of future academic success, according to nearly all tests, is a student's grades or class standing. But while it is a good index, it is a late one and does not help identify intellectual gifts very early. Also, while secondary school grades are fairly reliable for predicting college success, college grades show little correlation with success in graduate school. As for intelligence tests, such as the Stanford-Binet or the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS), they are the best national measurement we have of mental abilities, within the current framework of intellectual work. But they tend to

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rely on verbal facility and abstract reasoning and therefore discriminate against very able youngsters from non-verbal backgrounds — farmers, immigrants, Negroes, etc. — and allow students of a scientific, as opposed to a humanistic or societal, bent to score unduly high. Similarly, aptitude tests, such as the College Boards S.A.T.'s, are unquestionably useful indicators of a student's ability to manipulate the two primary symbolic languages of learning, words and numbers, but they reveal almost nothing about his curiosity, imagination, and dedication.

An honest, thorough evaluation by a compassionate, astute, experienced, highly intelligent teacher about a student he knows well can be the most valuable of all indicators about gifted youths. Unfortunately, too few evaluations are either honest or thorough; teachers rarely possess all the requisite skills to make such evaluations; and the growing size of schools, and the new intensity of demands upon the teachers, seldom allow for intimate contact anymore between teacher and pupil. George Hill, in his *Identifying and Educating Our Gifted Children,* points to one investigation where "only 15.7 percent of the children nominated by 6,000 teachers as the most intelligent in the class were found to be qualified for the gifted group." Other studies have shown that teachers in schools and colleges usually miss between 15 and 20 percent of the most gifted. (A factor here is that many of the least academically talented college graduates go into school teaching, particularly primary school teaching. Hence, at many schools a number of teachers are intellectually inferior to some of their students.)

**Who is academically gifted?**

Who is an "academically talented" youngster? According to the 1931 Hoover Conference report, "it has been practically agreed that 120 I.Q. may be safely taken as the lower limit" although "some systems do not go below 130 I.Q." The National Education Association, or N.E.A., which tends to be very egalitarian — "No one group of students, including the academically talented, must gain educational advantages at the expense of any other group" (1959) — used for its Academically Talented Project students with I.Q. above 116, or one standard deviation above the national mean of 100. Frank Copley, in *The American High School and the Talented Student,* wrote: "For this report I should say that academic talent begins at about I.Q. 120 or 125, or in terms of the College Board's S.A.T. tests, at a score of 600 or 620, both verbal and quantitative." Several states use 130 I.Q. as a demarcation point for the gifted, and that is where Leta Hollingworth drew the line, although Lewis Terman preferred to make 140 I.Q. the measure of a gifted person. One study disclosed that the highest achievers in the Dictionary of American Biography are mostly 130 I.Q. or above; relatively few are as low as, or lower than, 120 I.Q.

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Of those in the top fifth of their secondary school classes, Dael Wolfe found, 92 percent with 130 I.Q. or above graduated from college, but after that the percentage drops off sharply, indicating that perhaps 130 I.Q. might be a meaningful cut-off point. (The average I.Q. of Ph.D. recipients in the United States is 130.)

The most recent description, now used by most Federal education officials, gives three levels of academic superiority.

1. *"The academically talented,"* or those with *116 I.Q.* (Binet), one standard deviation above the mean of normal distribution. This group constitutes about *20 percent of the total school population,* and may be as high as 60 percent of the students in better private schools or schools in a high socio-economic community. The *College Board scores of this group are usually 450 or above* in both the verbal and mathematics areas. Students in this category can graduate from an average college, and some are able to do graduate work at the less demanding universities. (Most of the creatively talented, many of the psycho-socially talented, and a good portion of the kinesthetically talented are in this category, at the least.)

2. *"The gifted,"* or those with *132 I.Q.*, two standard deviations above the mean. This group comprises *about 3 percent of the school population. Their College Board S.A.T.'s are usually both above 600.* They can graduate from any college in the nation and many of them can earn professional degrees and Ph.D.'s at any university.

3. *"The highly gifted,"* or those with *148 I.Q.*, three standard deviations above the mean. Only *.1 percent of all the young* are found in this category. They usually achieve *College Board scores of 725* in the verbal and mathematics S.A.T.'s. Their potential is unlimited.

Using 1964-65 school enrollment figures, the percentage of secondary school students in each category looks like this: of 12,800,000 secondary school students, 2,560,000 were academically talented, 384,000 were gifted, 12,800 were highly gifted.

To look at it another way: of the approximately 2,300,000 secondary school *graduates* in June, 1965, roughly 550,000 were academically talented, 90,000 were gifted, and 3,000 were highly gifted. Nevertheless, *around 1,300,000 graduates – more than twice the number of academically talented in the Class of '65 – enrolled at colleges and universities in the fall of 1965.* It is not surprising that something like 20 percent drop out of college during, or at the end of, the freshman year, and only 45 percent are graduated from college.

### What makes them gifted?

The academically talented or gifted persons are not only statistics, however; they are products of particular circumstances. It may be extremely difficult to identify the truly extraordinary students, and

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hard to classify them, but we have fairly good information on the characteristics of intellectually superior children, and increasingly better knowledge about their formation.

Academically gifted youngsters tend to come from small families (they are frequently first children), from well-educated and productive homes (Terman found that 30 percent of the children of gifted people are also gifted), from high socio-economic backgrounds (each year 40 percent of the National Merit Scholars are discovered to need no scholarship to even the most expensive colleges), from certain ethnic-cultural origins (English, German, and Jewish families are more productive of intellectual children than Italian, Negro, or Polish families), and from particular religions (Jews produce more intellectuals than Protestants, who produce more than Catholics).

One highly important fact is that there is mounting evidence that the primary determinant in developing gifted children is the family. Considering that most persons concerned about raising the intellectual level of Americans concentrate on improving the schools, this may well be the most significant oversight in American education. (In this light the virtual suppression of the informative Moynihan Report on Negro family structure is a truly horrific blunder – both for the nation and the Negroes themselves.)

A money-minded nation like the United States is inclined to overlook family influence and regard poverty as the sole cause of low academic achievement. Similarly, the American optimistic view of human nature, the desire to play down religious differences, the change from a Puritan ethic to a "fun" ethic, and the swelling disdain for leaders and authority also cause many in the country to ignore the important role of child discipline and training, family religio-cultural attitudes, hard work, and parental encouragement. It is much easier to blame bureaucratic bungling, or the poor schools, for a student's failure. To be sure, both the schools and their officials are far from what they should be. But the vital influence of family cannot be neglected – particularly when more and more learning and value formation goes on outside the schools, through the mass media, advertising, and social activities.

Two examples of the predominant influence of the family, despite adverse socio-economic circumstances, can suffice here. One is what Samuel Stouffer calls "the amazing success story of the American Jew," who, despite being poor, produced many individuals of high academic achievement. The other is something that was caught by John Anderson: "Terman pointed out that there were 7 times as many children with high I.Q.'s within families of the professional class as in the class of unskilled laborers. But since the class of unskilled laborers at that time was 10 times as large as the professional class, actually there were, in absolute numbers, more gifted children in the

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United States within the laboring group than within the professional group." Poverty is obviously a strong deterrent to learning; but children from certain kinds of families learn despite its stultifying effects – while others don't.

### What can the schools do?

But it is not easy to know what to do about families, whereas we do have some ideas of what to do about schooling. It has now been fairly conclusively demonstrated, for instance, that young children can tackle much more mathematics and science – and enjoy it – than anyone dreamed fifteen years ago. It is stifling and backward, in this increasingly scientific-technical age, to ask a boy or girl to wait, say, until his junior year in secondary school, when he or she is 16, to begin chemistry, especially since gifted mathematicians and scientists seemingly blossom young or not at all. Also, foreign languages should be taught better, earlier, and more broadly, given America's increasingly international involvement. As late as 1957, 56 percent of the public high schools in the United States did not offer *any* foreign language.

There is some information coming in that may be of great help in nurturing more gifted students. Benjamin Bloom and a few others have argued – not entirely convincingly – that over one-half of a person's intellectual capacity is developed by the time he is four years old. (The importance of the family again!) This has led to a sudden and entirely welcome enthusiasm for nursery schools and pre-nursery programs, especially in areas where there are many poor people. Another study has shown that gifted children associate cheerfully with most other children in their classes until the fourth or fifth grade, when they begin to develop a sharp awareness of themselves and form friendships mainly among other bright children. Is the fifth grade the place to begin special sections or enriched courses? Also, gifted children are often more popular than others in the class until the eighth or ninth grade, when peer group values become dominant and the gifted are pressured to conform. Isn't high school, therefore, a place to intensify the awards and recognition for the gifted, or to consider special schools for them?

Other information also suggests the need for major reassessments. Henry Chauncey, president of Educational Testing Service, said recently: "You can predict how well an individual will do in college just about as accurately at age 14 as at age 18. This to most people is a rather surprising fact . . . [But] the growth of intellectual abilities, as reflected by standardized test scores, has stabilized by this age period." Shouldn't we do more testing at ages 13 and 14, and less at 16 and 17? And shouldn't we drastically improve the quality of primary schools and junior high school teachers?

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John Flanagan, reporting on the results of the U.S. Office of Education's Project Talent in 1964, found that, "20 to 30 percent of the students in grade 9 know more about many subject-matter fields than does the average student in grade 12. Variability within grades is greater than variability between grades." Doesn't this argue for more, not less, reordering of secondary school instruction? (Probably 80 percent of the country's high schools still have no systematic program for encouraging gifted students!)

Information of this kind hints that the United States should be moving toward a 4-4-4 system of education, with a lower, middle, and high school. The lower school might remain small and a neighborhood school with a mixture of academic talents – comprehensive schools in the old sense – with extra homework for the academically talented, special projects for the gifted, and tutoring and counseling for the below average. (I.Q. and other academic tests are least reliable for the early years.) The middle school, grades 5 to 8, could draw children from a wider area and have two "tracks," a fast and a slow one, with children in the academically talented (116 I.Q. or above) category in the fast section. The high school might be sectional (in metropolises), city-wide, or regional, no smaller than 1000 students, as many already are; and it could be "multi-tracked" in each course, or, in large cities, somewhat specialized by student interests and talents, *e.g.*, science, music, art, social studies, etc.

As for the very gifted, those with 148 I.Q. or above, it would appear that they should receive individual attention at all levels, and be accelerated in most cases. All good colleges should entertain early admission – a year or two ahead of time – for these rare youths.

### The task of reconciliation

American education in the past few years has entered a tortuously difficult period, as the schools and colleges have been asked to solve more and more of the community's and society's problems. In particular, they have been given two new huge and urgent tasks: that of identifying and developing the gifted student – fast – and that of helping to eliminate Negro scholastic inferiority – quickly. The two tasks, intellectual excellence and equality, requiring the schools to move in different directions, are tearing many schools in half. Zealots like to attribute the tensions exclusively to bigotry, selfishness, or anti-intellectualism, and they may be sometimes right in part; but there are legitimate national issues behind the local struggles.

Obviously, a complex, highly technological society faced with serious international problems requires ever greater numbers of persons with developed intellects. The United States faces a scarcity of academic talent, as numerous studies have shown; and the argument for better nurturing of the gifted, through distinctive courses, sepa-

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rate sections, and even special schools, is a powerful one.

Yet, the need to achieve a fully democratic and egalitarian society seems equally imperative, both on humanitarian and internationally political grounds. Such efforts as the recent drive by many Negroes and some of their white supporters to abolish New York's special schools because they are "undemocratic" and detrimental to a more integrated school system are entirely understandable, too. There may be a very real danger of leveling, in the worst sense, in the one position; but there may also be a genuine danger of erecting a meritocracy – a 20th century form of enlightened despotism – in the other.

Neither "equal treatment" in the schools nor "equality of opportunity" in the schools is a discardable ideal. Unfortunately, it is easier to celebrate them in the abstract than to reconcile them in practice. There is an inherent tension between equality and excellence—though not, one hopes, a contradiction. How the school systems cope with this tension is perhaps the fundamental issue in educational policy in our lifetime, as well as one of the key determinants of the future social arrangements of American society.

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# Equal schools or equal students?

JAMES S. COLEMAN

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 contains a section numbered 402, which went largely unnoticed at the time. This section instructs the Commissioner of Education to carry out a survey of "concerning the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities" by reason of race, religion or national origin, and to report to Congress and the President within two years. The Congressional intent in this section is somewhat unclear. But if, as is probable, the survey was initially intended as a means of finding areas of continued intentional discrimination, the intent later became less punitive-oriented and more future-oriented: *i.e.*, to provide a basis for public policy, at the local, state, and national levels, which might overcome inequalities of educational opportunity.

In the two years that have intervened (but mostly in the second), a remarkably vast and comprehensive survey was conducted, focussing principally on the inequalities of educational opportunity experienced by five racial and ethnic minorities: Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, American Indians, and Oriental Americans. In the central and largest portion of the survey, nearly 600,000 children at grades 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12, in 4000 schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, were tested and questioned; 60,000 teachers in these schools were questioned and self-tested; and principals of these schools were also questioned about their schools. The tests and questionnaires (administered in the fall of 1965 by Educational Testing

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Service) raised a considerable controversy in public school circles and among some parents, with concern ranging from Federal encroachment on the local education system to the spectre of invasion of privacy. Nevertheless, with a participation rate of about 70% of all the schools sampled, the survey was conducted; and on July 1, 1966, Commissioner Howe presented a summary report of this survey. On July 31, the total report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, 737 pages, was made available (Government Printing Office, $4.25).

The summary of the report has appeared to many who have read it to be curiously "flat," lacking in emphases and policy implications. Much of the same flatness can be found in the larger report. The seeming flatness probably derives from three sources: the research analyst's uneasiness in moving from description to implications; the government agency's uneasiness with survey findings that may have political repercussions; and, perhaps more important than either of these, the fact that the survey results do not lend themselves to the provision of simple answers. Nevertheless, the report is not so uncontroversial as it appears. And some of its findings, though cautiously presented, have sharp implications.

Perhaps the greatest virtue of this survey – though it has many faults – is that it did not take a simple or politically expedient view of educational opportunity. To have done so would have meant to measure (a) the objective characteristics of schools – number of books in the library, age of buildings, educational level of teachers, accreditation of the schools, and so on; and (b) the actual extent of racial segregation in the schools. The survey did look into these matters (and found less inequity in school facilities and resources, more in the extent of segregation, than is commonly supposed); but its principal focus of attention was not on what resources go into education, but on what product comes out. It did this in a relatively uncomplicated way, which is probably adequate for the task at hand: by tests which measured those areas of achievement most necessary for further progress in school, in higher education, and in successful competition in the labor market – that is, verbal and reading skills, and analytical and mathematical skills. Such a criterion does not allow statements about absolute levels of inequality or equality of education provided by the schools, because obviously there are more influences than the school's on a child's level of achievement in school, and there are more effects of schools than in these areas of achievement. What it does do is to broaden the question beyond the school to all those educational influences that have their results in the level of verbal and mathematical skill a young person is equipped with when he or she enters the adult world. In effect, it takes the perspective of this young adult, and says that what matters to him is, not how "equal" his school is, but rather whether he is equipped at the

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end of school to compete on an equal basis with others, whatever his social origins. From the perspective of society, it assumes that what is important is not to "equalize the schools" in some formal sense, but to insure that children from all groups come into adult society so equipped as to insure their full participation in this society.

Another way of putting this is to say that the schools are successful only insofar as they reduce the dependence of a child's opportunities upon his social origins. We can think of a set of conditional probabilities: the probability of being prepared for a given occupation or for a given college at the end of high school, conditional upon the child's social origins. The effectiveness of the schools consists, in part, of making the conditional probabilities less conditional – that is, less dependent upon social origins. Thus, equality of educational opportunity implies, not merely "equal" schools, but equally effective schools, whose influences will overcome the differences in starting point of children from different social groups.

## The widening educational gap

This approach to educational opportunity, using as it does achievement on standardized tests, treads on sensitive ground. Differences in average achievement between racial groups can lend themselves to racist arguments of genetic differences in intelligence; even apart from this, they can lead to invidious comparisons between groups which show different average levels of achievement. But it is precisely the avoidance of such sensitive areas that can perpetuate the educational deficiences with which some minorities are equipped at the end of schooling.

What, then, does the survey find with regard to effects of schooling on test achievement? Children were tested at the beginning of grades 1, 3, 6, 9, and 12. Achievement of the average American Indian, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Negro (in this descending order) was much lower than the average white or Oriental American, at all grade levels. The amount of difference ranges from about half a standard deviation to one standard deviation at early grade levels. At the 12th grade, it increases to beyond one standard deviation. (One standard deviation difference means that about 85% of the minority group children score below the average of the whites, while if the groups were equal only about 50% would score below this average.) The grade levels of difference range up to 5 years of deficiency (in math achievement) or 4 years (in reading skills) at the 12th grade. In short, the differences are large to begin with, and they are even larger at higher grades.

Two points, then, are clear: (1) *these minority children have a serious educational deficiency at the start of school, which is obviously not a result of school;* and (2) *they have an even more serious*

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*deficiency at the end of school, which is obviously in part a result of school.*

Thus, by the criterion stated earlier – that the effectiveness of schools in creating equality of educational opportunity lies in making the conditional probabilities of success less conditional – the schools appear to fail. At the end of school, the conditional probabilities of high achievement are even *more* conditional upon racial or ethnic background than they are at the beginning of school.

There are a number of results from the survey which give further evidence on this matter. First, within each racial group, the strong relation of family economic and educational background to achievement does not diminish over the period of school, and may even increase over the elementary years. Second, most of the variation in student achievement lies within the same school, very little of it is between schools. The implication of these last two results is clear: family background differences account for much more variation in achievement than do school differences.

Even the school-to-school variation in achievement, though relatively small, is itself almost wholly due to the *social* environment provided by the school: the educational backgrounds and aspirations of other students in the school, and the educational backgrounds and attainments of the teachers in the school. *Per pupil expenditure, books in the library, and a host of other facilities and curricular measures show virtually no relation to achievment if the "social" environment of the school – the educational backgrounds of other students and teachers – is held constant.*

The importance of this last result lies, of course, in the fact that schools, as currently organized, are quite culturally homogeneous as well as quite racially segregated: teachers tend to come from the same cultural groups (and especially from the same race) as their students, and the student bodies are themselves relatively homogeneous. Given this homogeneity, the principal agents of effectiveness in the schools – teachers and other students – act to maintain or reinforce the initial differences imposed by social origins.

One element illustrates well the way in which the current organization of schools maintains the differences over generations: a Negro prospective teacher leaves a Negro teacher's college with a much lower level of academic competence (as measured by the National Teacher's Examination) than does his white counterpart leaving his largely white college; then he teaches Negro children (in school with other Negro children, ordinarily from educationally deficient backgrounds), who learn at a lower level, in part because of his lesser competence; some of these students, in turn, go into teacher training institutions to become poorly-trained teachers of the next generation.

Altogether, *the sources of inequality of educational opportunity*

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*appear to lie first in the home itself and the cultural influences immediately surrounding the home; then they lie in the schools' ineffectiveness to free achievement from the impact of the home, and in the schools' cultural homogeneity which perpetuates the social influences of the home and its environs.*

### A modest, yet radical proposal

Given these results, what do they suggest as to avenues to equality of educational opportunity? Several elements seem clear:

a) For those children whose family and neighborhood are educationally disadvantaged, it is important to replace this family environment as much as possible with an educational environment – by starting school at an earlier age, and by having a school which begins very early in the day and ends very late.

b) It is important to reduce the social and racial homogeneity of the school environment, so that those agents of education that do show some effectiveness – teachers and other students – are not mere replicas of the student himself. In the present organization of schools, it is the neighborhood school that most insures such homogeneity.

c) The educational program of the school should be made more effective than it is at present. The weakness of this program is apparent in its inability to overcome initial differences. It is hard to believe that we are so inept in educating our young that we can do no more than leave young adults in the same relative competitive positions we found them in as children.

Several points are obvious: It is not a solution simply to pour money into improvement of the physical plants, books, teaching aids, of schools attended by educationally disadvantaged children. For other reasons, it will not suffice merely to bus children or otherwise achieve pro forma integration. (One incidental effect of this would be to increase the segregation within schools, through an increase in tracking.)

The only kinds of policies that appear in any way viable are those which do not seek to improve the education of Negroes and other educationally disadvantaged at the expense of those who are educationally advantaged. This implies new kinds of educational institutions, with a vast increase in expenditures for education – not merely for the disadvantaged, but for all children. The solutions might be in the form of educational parks, or in the form of private schools paid by tuition grants (with Federal regulations to insure racial heterogeneity), public (or publicly-subsidized) boarding schools (like the North Carolina Advancement School), or still other innovations. This approach also implies reorganization of the curriculum within schools. One of the major reasons for "tracking" is the narrowness of our teaching methods – they can tolerate only a narrow range of skill in

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the same classroom. Methods which greatly widen the range are necessary to make possible racial and cultural integration within a school – and thus to make possible the informal learning that other students of higher educational levels can provide. Such curricular innovations are possible – but, again, only through the investment of vastly greater sums in education than currently occurs.

It should be recognized, of course, that the goal described here – of equality of educational opportunity through the schools – is far more ambitious than has ever been posed in our society before. The schools were once seen as a supplement to the family in bringing a child into his place in adult society, and they still function largely as such a supplement, merely perpetuating the inequalities of birth. Yet the conditions imposed by technological change, and by our post-industrial society, quite apart from any ideals of equal opportunity, require a far more primary role for the school, if society's children are to be equipped for adulthood.

### Self-confidence and performance

One final result of the survey gives an indication of still another – and perhaps the most important – element necessary for equality of educational opportunity for Negroes. One attitude of students was measured at grades 9 and 12 – an attitude which indicated the degree to which the student felt in control of his own fate. For example, one question was: "Agree or disagree: good luck is more important than hard work for success." Another was: "Agree or disagree: every time I try to get ahead someone or something stops me." Negroes much less often than whites had such a sense of control of their fate –a difference which corresponds directly to reality, and which corresponds even more markedly to the Negro's historical position in American society. However, despite the very large achievement differences between whites and Negroes at the 9th and 12th grades, *those Negroes who gave responses indicating a sense of control of their own fate achieved higher on the tests than those whites who gave the opposite responses. This attitude was more highly related to achievement than any other factor in the student's background or school.*

This result suggests that internal changes in the Negro, changes in his conception of himself in relation to his environment, may have more effect on Negro achievement than any other single factor. The determination to overcome relevant obstacles, and the belief that he will overcome them – attitudes that have appeared in an organized way among Negroes only in recent years in some civil rights groups – may be the most crucial elements in achieving equality of opportunity – not because of changes they will create in the white community, but principally because of the changes they create in the Negro himself.

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# The trouble with higher education

JOHN WILLIAM WARD

Berkeley is now a symbol in the full sense of the word, that is, an image which condenses a complex range of ideas and emotions and presents it for our contemplation. Berkeley is a symbol of the necessities and the possibilities which confront higher education in the United States today. In this sense, Berkeley is now a convenient shorthand name for the internal structural strains and the external social demands which trouble every university and college in the country. If it were not, if the explosion of student unrest and the painful grinding to a halt of one of the world's great universities were purely local phenomena, Berkeley would soon have passed from the front pages of the national press and soon been forgotten. But the torrent of books and articles about the meaning of what happened at Berkeley poured forth because Berkeley dramatized a national and not a local problem. Higher education in the United States is today – always granting the fond hope that war will not obliterate all other social matters and make them inconsequential – the most important institution in American society as we enter the second half of the twentieth century. The claim is large but not extravagant. And Berkeley symbolizes the crucial fact that higher education is in trouble.

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## I

One way to measure the social importance of higher education in the United States today is simply to attend to the many voices talking about it, voices which have little in common except a subject. For examples: for the business community, Merrill Lynch, *et al.*, having learned from Fritz Machlup, the Princeton economist, that apart from defense the "knowledge industry" comprises the single largest and fastest growing sector of the Gross National Product, speak with optimism of the new and expanding "horizons" for investment opportunity in education; at the liberal center, Walter Lippman writes in the *New Republic* that the only institution left to fill the void left by the dissolution of traditional authority in the modern, secular world is the university; on the "new" left, C. Wright Mills, dismayed by the bourgeois aspirations of the laboring classes, has claimed the new class of intellectuals created by advanced education as the only possible base for a new radicalism in modern politics. In short, the university is asked to bear the responsibility for economic growth, for cultural cohesion and identity, and for radical social change. The burden, however shortly named, is awesome and it is the burden which for a moment broke Berkeley and it is the burden which weighs on the back of every institution of higher learning in the country.

At least since Quintilian took education out of the hands of the Roman *paterfamilias* and put it at the service of the Emperor Vespasian to restore the sober virtues of the early Roman Republic and to create the good citizen, education has been inevitably political. From the beginning, in our own society education has had a special task thrust upon it. Scholars like Lawrence Cremin and Bernard Bailyn have rescued the history of education in America from accounts of pedagogical and curricular changes to remind us of what we should never have forgotten: education is one of the major institutions in society to create order and to accommodate change. And change has been about the only constant throughout American history. The centrifugal force of expansion across a virgin continent, the shattering of elite leadership by an egalitarian democratic ideology, the sudden transition from an agrarian to an industrial society, the need to acculturate millions of newly arrived immigrants, all these massive forces of social history have pushed and pulled American education throughout its turbulent history, but mainly at the lower levels, in the common grade school and the public high school. Now the tides of change are washing over the colleges and the universities.

When Fritz Machlup speaks of the knowledge industry, he refers to any person employed in the production and distribution of ideas, which makes room for Madison Avenue and *Time* and *Life* and radio and television networks. In that company, most colleges and universities are small as well as uncomfortable, but however sniffish the

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academic intellectual may be about such enterprises, one thing is clear. However "educational" they may or may not be, they cannot survive without the pool of labor which higher education creates.

But higher education, even in its own terms, is an enormous business. In 1870, there were about 300 colleges and universities in the country with little more than 5,000 professors and 50,000 students. Less than two percent of the eighteen to twenty-one age group (conventionally used to define the potential college population) were enrolled. By World War II, the number of institutions had become 1,690, the number of students rose to one and a third million, and those in attendance to 14 percent. Two years ago, in 1964, there were about 2,100 degree-granting institutions of higher education, 400,000 faculty members and almost five million students, around 40 percent of their age group. Current projections for 1970, just four years from now, predict a student population of 7 million, almost one-half of all young men and women between eighteen and twenty-one in the United States.

Why? Partly, as President Johnson insisted recently, because one version of democracy insists that education is a right not a privilege and that all should have it. But ideals, however deeply cherished, generally produce slender results unless they are attached to signficant social and economic forces and the massive movement of young people into higher education in the United States today is no exception. Intelligence is now as important as capital in economic development and economic growth. John Kenneth Galbraith recently argued at a conference in England that the financial power of the large corporation is today less important than the quality of the organization itself and that this depends directly on the intellectual capacity, the training, and the skills of the individuals who constitute the organization. So, indirectly, let alone directly in the contract research it does for government and the consulting its faculty does for business, the university is now the chief source of innovation in the American economy. Closely related to that economic fact is the social fact that prestige in society, one's "class" in our open and "classless" society, is largely a function of one's educational level. Economic opportunity and social privilege are the engine of change, even if democratic ideology is the switchman who determines where the traffic is going.

## Practical and ideal service

If economic and social pressures were all there were to the problem, then the problem – the sheer matter of numbers – would be enormously difficult but surely not insurmountable. Money would take care of it once society was made to see the advantage. But Lippmann's point complicates the matter. Society needs more than trained intelligence simply to serve its necessary functions. The uni-

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versity cannot neglect that practical need, but society finally will not allow it to neglect a still greater need. Lippmann puts it succinctly: "The dissolution of the ancestral order and the dethronement of usage and authority in modern society have left us dependent upon man's ability to understand and govern his own fate." To do so, man needs more than specialized training and marketable skill; he needs a generalized capacity to think and to judge and to see beyond the constrictions of his own moment in time. If modern man is to develop the capacity to be free in a world where customary usage and traditional ways no longer chart his course, he needs, in other words, a liberal education. Lippmann is asking the colleges and universities to do no less than to provide what Plato called the "royal science," the knowledge needed by the rulers of the state, in an age when Everyman is King. Professors may flinch from the arrogant assumption that the task is theirs, but it is hard to see who else there is to accept it. The Family? The Church? The political parties of liberal democratic politics? To ask the question is to answer it and to name the void which Lippmann thinks only an ideal liberal education can fill. Education must, if only by default, create the free intelligence which is capable of using the social and political freedom which is still our ideal if not yet our reality.

To do so, however, may serve society in the long run but challenge it in the short, and it is precisely this conflict between practical and ideal service to society which lies at the bottom of student unrest from the great urban university like Berkeley to the small private college in its pastoral setting like Amherst. "The specialization of function and knowledge," declared the Students for a Democratic Society at Port Huron, Michigan, in 1962, "admittedly necessary to our complex technological and social structure, has produced an exaggerated compartmentalization of study and understanding. This has contributed to an overly parochial view, by faculty, of the role of its research and scholarship, to a discontinuous and truncated understanding, by students, of the surrounding social order; and to a loss of personal attachment, by nearly all, to the worth of study as a humanistic enterprise." More vociferously, more directly and more indecorously, the new student left asks what Lippmann asks the university to do, but with a sharper edge because there is too much in contemporary American society these educated sons and daughters of the middle class do not like. Moving from civil-rights protests to anti-war campaigns to educational reform, they have a single goal. They are trying, in the words of one of their heroes, Robert Moses (now Parris), they are "trying very hard to be people and that is very hard." To say what follows from that estimable sentiment is also hard, but in a curious way the radicals among the students share the same view of the relation of the university to the general society as

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their enemy, the administrators and faculty committed to the multiversity and the purpose of serving society. SDS and the loose alliance of students around them spurn the notion of disinterested intelligence or withdrawal into the academy from the heat and dust of daily life. They want the faculty and the curriculum even more directly related to the needs of society. Only they see the real needs of society as ideal, drastically different from the practical needs they believe higher education to be serving all too well already. They want the university to accept the responsibility of being the fulcrum of change, to move contemporary America to a more just and more humane society rather than to a more powerful and more efficient version of what it now is. They want not to be prepared to play a role in society. They want to change society so they may play a role in it.

## II

It is such a configuration of forces – economic and social change in the structure of contemporary society, the need for direction and order in a world wracked by change, the moral demand for the achievement of a truly great society – which has imposed upon higher education today an incredible task. Whether higher education in the United States is competent to deal with the burden imposed upon it is perhaps impossible to say. At least, it is impossible to say if one stays at the level of grand historical and ideal generalization. The future may best be seen by scrutinizing the particulars of change and reform going on in higher education and guessing where they may lead. Three recent books provide three different angles of vision on what higher education might become. One is the report of a select committee at Berkeley, a faculty committee charged with "finding ways in which the traditions of humane learning and scientific inquiry can best be advanced under the challenging conditions of size and scale that confront" the University of California. A second, also directed primarily to faculty colleagues, in this instance at Columbia University, but not in so official a fashion as the Berkeley Report and not the product of a committee but of a single man, is Daniel Bell's *The Reforming of General Education.* The third is the publication of a series of lectures given at Princeton by James A. Perkins, the President of Cornell University, under the title, *The University in Transition.* Each complements the others in significant ways.

If Berkeley is a symbol, it is still a particular place with particular problems and the *Report of the Select Committee,* now popularly known as the Muscatine Report after its chairman, Charles Muscatine, professor of English and Chaucer scholar, is presented with an eye toward the particular. It contains forty-two specific recommendations for change at Berkeley. But it would be unfortunate, indeed, if only Berkeley were to attend to it because each recommendation is made

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within the context of a general discussion which argues its necessity, and the larger context applies to a larger community than Berkeley.

At one level, the Muscatine report is a capsule case study of what did happen at Berkeley. Chapter II, "The Berkeley Students," provides a sober and statistical description of the Berkeley undergraduate body and the conditions of their environment. Although it gained considerable graduate student support, the student rebellion at Berkeley began among the undergraduates and the Muscatine Report reflects the fact. There are about 17,000 undergraduates at Berkeley, roughly 10,000 upperclassmen (juniors and seniors) and 7,000 underclassmen. But students do not come to Berkeley and work four years and graduate. The pattern is remarkably different. Only about half of those who enter as freshmen graduate; the other half either drop out or transfer elsewhere. And of the graduating class of 1965, 40% were transfer students into Berkeley who had been there only during their upper-class years. There is little continuity in educational experience and, so, little chance that students will catch the sense of a shared community. The absence of community, what the Muscatine Report calls, "the missing college community," is compounded by the fact that few students live on the campus. They commute, as to any place of work, and a survey shows that two-thirds of the students at Berkeley regard the institution as "impersonal" and one-third "often feel lonely walking on campus even though there are crowds of people around."

In the place of physical community, then, Berkeley can only offer an ideal community, that is, a shared commitment to an intellectual process which defines a community of teachers and scholars and students. But, although the quality of students entering Berkeley has risen significantly, at least as measured by verbal and mathematical aptitude tests, "only four percent of [the] graduating class of 1965 had been in honors programs, and only eight percent had received any individual instruction." Further, over forty-percent of classes taken in the freshmen and sophomore years were taught by graduate teaching assistants and throughout the entire college, 65% of the classes and laboratories of 15 students or less, and 63% with 16 to 30 students, were taught by graduate students. To generalize: education at Berkeley is largely in the hands of young graduate students, themselves just out of college and just beginning their own professional preparation. The conditions under which those graduate students labor can be suggested by the fact that all seventeen graduate departments in the humanities with about 1,600 graduate students have reading rooms for them which seat 124; or, with a total graduate body of around 10,000, the Main Library at Berkeley has 415 individual study spaces assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis; or, the

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Department of English with almost 500 graduate students has desk space for 75.

How some undergraduates reacted to what these figures barely imply can be seen in an open letter written by one during the Free Speech Movement crisis: ". . . your situation is hopeless when it comes to actually participating in serious learning. As an undergraduate you receive a four-year long series of sharp staccatos: eight semesters, forty courses, one hundred twenty or more units, fifteen hundred to two thousand impersonal lectures, and over three hundred oversized 'discussion' meetings. Approaching what is normally associated with learning; reading, writing and exams, your situation becomes absurd." Despite the split infinitive and the weakness in punctuation, the judgment is fair.

### Circumventing the departments

The Muscatine report faces the facts honestly and most of its recommendations are aimed at involving the faculty more in teaching, improving the quality and compensation of graduate assistants, and changing the curriculum and conditions as best as Berkeley can with the numbers it has. Understandably enough, the Committee would prefer to see Berkeley "change gradually and continuously rather than having to suffer the shocks of drastic adjustment." And the philosophy it offers is noble: "What will our students have in common? Our answer is that ideally they will have in common the exposure to a noble stance, both scientific and humane, that will be exemplified in the conduct of everyone of us. It is not, then, what we teach that will give final validity to education at Berkeley, but what we are. We reject for Berkeley the idea of teachers who are not also scholars. . . . By the same token, we find no place on the faculty for researchers who are not teachers. . . . There is no scholarly eminence that justifies contempt of students. . . . By this central act of service – teaching – we submit our learning directly to the test of human relevance and complete ourselves as proper objects for the emulation of the young."

But the exemplary character of the faculty as noble models for the young is, to put it softly, a dubious road to reform. How to relate the advantages of a superior faculty, at the moment made economically possible by the large number of teaching graduate students, to the educational interests of the young is the crux of the matter; and the single most important reform the Muscatine committee put forward, one already adopted by the Berkeley faculty last March, is the creation of "A Board of Educational Development." Broadly, the Board is charged with oversight of new and experimental courses and programs which do not have a place in traditional departments, perhaps even "field study" off the campus, that is, providing credit for social service and community projects which are "educational,"

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although not in the conventional curricular sense. And the Board is given power: if departments balk, then the Board may ultimately grant a degree for a program of study which finds no departmental home. That is a radical move in higher education where, traditionally, departments have jealously guarded the degree-granting power. Naturally, the Muscatine committee trusts that the showdown will never come, but the Board it has created is probably the best measure of its intense awareness of the need to have a powerful lever to budge the vested interests of the various specialities within the particular departments of higher learning.

The Muscatine committee frankly faced the fact that Berkeley could not provide a common experience in general education for so diverse and large an undergraduate body. But neither did it dare rely simply on the goodwill of a generous faculty. As it puts it, "the needs are too great; our energies and resources too few." So the Board of Educational Development is, obviously, a middle-of-the-road solution, however radical it might first appear. What it provides, in effect, is a resource for the highly motivated and engaged student who is disenchanted with the regular course of study offered in the college. An outsider can only hazard the guess that this is, perhaps, the best that can be done. But the effect is obvious: the change will provide a safety-valve for the discontented and bright student (and it *was* the bright student who was most discontent) who can always be told to take his ambitions to the Board of Educational Development if he rebels against the quality and style of teaching in the regular pattern of instruction.

### Education and the method of inquiry

What the reform at Berkeley may imply (and, to be honest, one at this moment has to say "may") is that the democratic ideal of mass education must find a way to provide sufficient variety within the huge student bodies it creates to allow for special education for the gifted and less than ideal education for the mass of students, those not bold enough to bitch or bright enough to care. Daniel Bell in his suggestions for the "reforming" of general education at Columbia (and the language is intentional, to suggest a never-ending, ongoing process) refuses the option, although one must remember that Columbia college has fewer than 3,000 students to Berkeley's 17,000.

Bell's book, because it is his alone, is much more forceful, apodictic, and wide-ranging than the Muscatine report. Chapter III, "The Tableau of Social Change," is an admirable review of the outside forces playing upon the shape and structure of higher education, and the "Coda" at the end is an eloquent affirmation of the tradition of humane and liberal learning against both the technocratic specialists in our culture and the anti-intellectual assault of intellectuals themselves upon the dignity of reason. Because Bell treats Columbia Col-

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lege as a microcosm of the social context of education today, his book should reach a much broader audience than the in-group of academics and educators (although Bell has his own provincialism, and the non-Jewish reader may tire of the number of Talmudic anecdotes which populate the footnotes).

The heart of Bell's book is his answer to the central problem of higher education, how is it possible to be a generally educated man in a world of proliferating knowledge and necessary specialization? When, in the late 19th century, less than two percent of the potential population were going on to college, higher education was clearly for the social and economic elite who largely shared a common background and common aspirations. To provide a common body of intellectual fare was no great task. More importantly, it is now fair to say that no faculty in any college or in any university in the country can generally agree on what particular subjects would define the condition of being generally educated. At Harvard, after three years of discussion, the faculty refused to ratify a new program in general education and President Pusey had to gloss the inability of one of the best faculties in the nation to reach any general conclusion by saying that, after all, the discussion was good for everyone.

"The recalcitrance of the problem," as Bell says, "may lie directly in the structure of knowledge today." If it is no longer possible to find general agreement on what an educated man should know, should we then collapse the college at two ends, downward into accelerated secondary school education and upward into early specialization and graduate training, as the French do? Bell says no and offers, not just a necessary, but an intellectually conceived answer to the problem of general education for all students, not just for the select few.

Beneath the many particulars of his discussion, Bell's answer is that, if it is not possible any longer to say what, in terms of subject matter, an educated man should know, then education consists of an awareness of the process by which men arrive at provisional truths in the three traditional areas of inquiry, the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences. Not that a mode of inquiry can be taught apart from subject matter, but the emphasis is to be on the assumptions and procedures of different modes of the inquiring mind. Bell still believes in the worth of a generally shared knowledge of the history of Western civilization, but beyond that requirement the emphasis is not on content but upon the applicability of modes of knowing which relate to experience generally, both in education and in life. In essence, Bell's answer is a rejection of the widely held disjunction between specialization and general education. "One must embody and exemplify general education through disciplines; and one must extend the context of specialism so that the ground of knowledge is explicit. The common bond of the two is the emphasis

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on conceptual inquiry." So, the emphasis in general education, its peculiar and still vital province, "must be less on what one knows and more on the self-conscious ground of knowledge; how one knows what one knows, and the principal of the relevant selection of facts."

## The force of inertia

At one point in his book, although there glancing at secondary school education, Bell writes that the problem of reform is not so much curricular, "it is a matter, much more difficult to achieve, of raising to consciousness the underlying values of a middle-class society in a people who do not want such a confrontation with their lives. But this is, within the compass of this book, necessarily an aside." Daniel Bell is not exactly the darling of the new student left and it is not likely that they will soon be attracted to his definition of what modern education must become. A strong threat to education's basic commitment to tradition and disciplined inquiry comes from that breed of student who demands imperiously that all education relate directly to his immediate experience. As the Muscatine report bluntly puts it, "Those who believe that there can be short cuts to social reform, mysticism, and love cannot conceive that there are no short cuts to learning." So, the impatient student will insist that Bell's stress on conceptual method is just another dodge around the dubious values of a middle-class society which he refuses to confront.

But, although he does not claim it himself and may not want to, there is a value in the proposal Bell makes, a value which is basic to the life of the mind and, perhaps more importantly, *the* value which is basic to the working of a democratic society. It is the value of the way in which agreement is reached, the institutionalization of the process by which truth is discovered, whether intellectually or politically, with the end never determined authoritatively in advance nor the search ever closed down. If one takes this view, then Bell's proposal for general education is not to train people so they may live in a democratic society, it is to create the liberal quality of mind which makes a democratic society possible, a quality of mind which insists that the ultimate value lies in how we arrive at truth and not in the particular truths we arrive at. It is a quality of mind which denies dogmatism, which is flexible and open to new experience, and has the courage to doubt that the truth is ever finally known. Such an education might result in that admirable maturity described by the late Professor Joseph Schumpeter: "To realize the relative validity of one's convictions, and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian." But whether higher education can bring the United States to that pitch of civilization is yet to be seen.

Whether it can or not depends mainly on whether the inertia

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and resistance to change inevitable in any large and established institution can be overcome. To take only one example: in a discussion of the possibility of widening the definition of education to include the worth of work done beyond the confines of the regular course and classroom, the Muscatine report observes that "supervision and accreditation of field study is already open to departments by use of courses designated for special study and individual research." In other words, the legislation to achieve the reform the committee proposed was already on the books, but no one had the imagination or the impulse to use it! To overcome that failure, the Muscatine report was driven to proposing the new Board of Educational Development and the creation of a new "Council for Special Curricula," that is, two new committees, and, in order to give them access to money and power at the top, to creating a new executive officer, a Vice-Chancellor in the Administration (although the faculty exercised its political prerogative and reduced that title to Assistant-Chancellor). Whether this bureaucratic superstructure will stifle the impulse to educational reform or not, it points to the immense difficulty of moving any large institution of higher education off dead center.

**Who speaks for society?**

This brings one to President Perkin's book. His book is slender and his thesis is unadorned and direct: "the discussion of the university has now come to the point where theory and doctrine must encounter the practical problems of management and direction." The major practical problem facing the management is to see to it that the three major functions of the modern university do not get out of balance. They are the discovery of knowledge (research), the transmission of knowledge (teaching), and the application of knowledge (public service). But who is to see to it that the balance is maintained? Not the students: "The student is a student. He is at the university to learn, not to manage; to reflect, not to decide; to observe, not to coerce." Not the faculty: "Partial views which are based upon increasingly specialized interests make it difficult for the faculty to have a point of view on broad institutional matters. Consequently, the faculty's administrative stance contains elements of senatorial courtesy—maximum permissiveness with respect to individual faculty desires, combined with maximum protection if anyone would interfere with this permissiveness. Such a posture is exactly right for the protection of the classroom, but it is quite inadequate for educational or institutional management." So, since Mr. Perkins is President of Cornell, one is not exactly astonished to discover that direction must ultimately derive from the administration, the President and his staff.

Without meeting him, one catches the sense from *The University in Transition* that Mr. Perkins must be a congenial and winning man.

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A nice sense of humor and a wry, ironic self-depreciation run through his pages. But the manner only makes more attractive, it does not try to conceal, the essentially blunt toughness of the man. He was chosen to lead one large state university and he intends to lead it and tells other presidents they had better get busy and lead theirs. But before students and faculty decide to go about their proper business and not bother the management, they might well ask Mr. Perkins to get a bit tougher with his own criterion for making decisions.

Mr. Perkins sees, quite properly, that the single university is no longer autonomous but is part of one level in a complex structure which reaches from individual departments and the college below, to regional and federal and international organizations above. Having described this complexly interwoven structure, Mr. Perkins adds: "Now, in the long run, this structure itself matters very little to society. What society cares about is not which level of this hierachy has the right to lead and to make decisions. What ultimately matters is that the right decisions are made at the level most competent to make them, and that these decisions are carried out successfully. The approval of society will come, in the end, not by claims of privilege but rather from results observed over time. And the desired results will be in those areas where society asks most of its educational system."

The question to ask here is obvious: who, asking most, speaks for society? Clark Kerr's now famous Godkin Lectures on the multiversity welcomed the "constructive chaos" of education and its response to the various demands society put upon it. Mr. Perkins rejects the model, but how does it differ from his own? And if the test of the success of the university is the pragmatic one of results over time in response to the desires of society, however defined, when will the time possibly come when the university through its leadership decides that American society is simply wrong? Or is that an impossible thought? What if it turns out that Lippmann is right, after all, and that the major resource for the direction of society lies within the university and not somewhere else? To whom does the management turn then?

## III

One version of American history today has it that Americans have succeeded so well by resolutely refusing to think about what they were doing, by doing what comes naturally, by reacting practically to the exigencies of experience and adapting to the demands of the moment, unfettered by the constraints of self-consciousness and reason's imperious demand for coherence between thought and action. The version leads to different evaluations in different hands, of course. For Louis Hartz, the inability of Americans to transcend

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by an effort of imaginative thought the uniquely favorable circumstances of the American experience is the one great flaw in American culture. Americans have become the victims of their own good fortune. Confined within the clichés of a liberal consensus, with no significant social group to challenge its terms, Americans have been trained by their very success into a deep suspicion for systematic thought, and left, ironically at the moment of their greatest power, unable to understand themselves, let alone the rest of the changing world in which they play so powerful a part. For Daniel Boorstin, the descriptive becomes normative and pragmatic expediency is elevated into a species of philosophic naturalism, an intellectual form of anti-intellectualism, which celebrates the repudiation of systematic thought and rejects the attempt to control in advance the unforeseen consequences of social change. What has worked so well in the past will work best in the future and the genius of American culture has been its willingness to let itself be shaped by the contours of experience.

History-as-it-happens, rather than history-as-it-is-written, will have the final say about which evaluation turns out to be controlling. But as Americans move into the end of the twentieth century, there is one institution which can no longer afford the luxury of waiting to see how the story turns out, and that is the institution of education itself. Not simply because education has a stake in the notion that self-consciousness is a good thing, but because education, especially at its higher reaches, now plays a leading part in the plot, and how it plays that part will largely determine how the story turns out. If higher education decides that it will turn out "whiz kids," not just for the Pentagon but for every demanding institution in the world we live in, then we have the multiversity, straining its resources to provide the trained intelligence which society does in fact need. But, if higher education accepts the role of acting as witness against society, as well as servant to it, the burden of fostering minds which are free as well as servants, minds which may control power and not simply be victims to it, then we have the university and the ideal of a liberal education.

What troubles American higher education today is the simple fact that it has no choice between these simple alternatives. It must meet both demands. It must serve power and yet make that power humane. Whether it can or not is at the bottom of what troubles American education today.

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# The rediscovery of the market

CHARLES E. LINDBLOM

What is the significance of the great debate, already several years old, on the appropriate role of profits in the planned economies of Communist Europe?

One interpretation of this sea change in Communist thinking is that Communism is turning capitalist. Since imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, many Americans are delighted to accept this interpretation. But the Communists do not see their reforms in this light; and Professor Liberman, whose name is foremost in the Soviet debate over the profit motive, has explicitly denied that Communist use of the profit motive is capitalistic. On his side of the argument there is some weighty evidence: namely, the existence of profit-oriented *socialist* enterprises all over the world – e.g., municipally-owned public utilities in the U.S., the nationalized industries of Britain and Western Europe, and the socialized enterprises of many developing nations (like Hindustan Machine Tools of India).

Indeed, the significance of the reforms has little to do with the antithesis capitalism-socialism. The new and growing use of profitability criteria in Communist enterprises can better be understood as a phase in *a worldwide rediscovery of the market mechanism.*

Now, capitalism and the market mechanism are not the same thing. Understandably, they are often confused with each other, because it was under capitalist auspices that the market mechanism first became, on a vast scale, the organizer of economic life. But the market mechanism is a device that can be employed for planned as well as unplanned economies, and for socialism and communism as well as capitalism. Today the market mechanism is a device both for

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the organization of the relatively unplanned sectors of the American economy and for such central planning as is practiced in the United States. In Britain and Scandinavia, it organizes both the private and the socialized sectors of the economy. In Yugoslavia it serves as an overall coordinator for an economy of publicly-owned enterprises. In many underdeveloped countries it is a powerful tool of development planning. It is this market mechanism rather than capitalism that the U.S.S.R. and its satellites are trying to employ – precisely to improve their planning.

Except for a convulsive attempt between 1918 and 1921, Soviet policy has never questioned the practical usefulness of money and prices. This does not mean, however, that the Soviet Union has heretofore made much use of the market mechanism. By the market mechanism, we mean the use of money and prices in a very particular way: prices and price movements are employed – instead of targets, quotas, and administrative instructions – to give signals to producers with respect to what and how much they should produce; and prices on labor and materials consumed are set to reflect the relative value of these inputs in alternative uses to which they might be put.

It is the possibility of using a pricing process to evaluate alternative possibilities and to cue producers accordingly – whether to suit the preferences of individual consumers in the market or the preferences of central planners, whether to administer the resources of an advanced economy or to guide the developmental choices of an underdeveloped economy – that has struck a new note in Communist economic policy, in the economic reorganization of Western Europe, and in the economic development of the nations still in early stages of growth. The significance of the development, of which Communist reforms are only a part, can be appreciated in the light of its own history.

## II

**Adam Smith and laissez faire:** – Most people who know anything at all about the market mechanism seem not to have advanced beyond Adam Smith's view of it. He saw it as *an alternative* to government control of economic life. He was concerned about inefficiency and other defects of mercantilism; and, to speak anachronistically, he thought he had found in the market mechanism a substitute for incompetent planners. His specific insights were profound. He saw the possibility that resources could be systematically allocated in response to human needs as a by-product of "selfish" individual decisions simply to buy or to sell. He saw that prices established by consumers in their trading with producers could establish a set of signals that could direct the productive processes of the whole economy. He saw that competitive bidding for inputs would establish a market value

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for them that would make possible a comparison of their productivities in alternative uses. He saw that a comparison of input prices and output prices, that is, of the money cost of production with money receipts, could control the flow of resources into each of their alternative possible uses. Finally, he saw that the market mechanism was for all these reasons an extraordinarily powerful device for decentralizing economic decisions. In all this, however, his vision was limited: the market mechanism was always a private enterprise market and always an alternative to planning.

**Market Socialism:** — It was not until the development, over a century and a half later, of the theory of market socialism that any significant number of people perceived the possibilities of using the market mechanism in a completely socialized economy. Even today the idea of market socialism remains esoteric. In 1920, Ludwig von Mises published his now famous challenge to the socialists to indicate whether they had any system in mind for the actual administration of economic affairs in a socialist order. It was a challenge that many socialists brushed aside, believing that they could cross that bridge when they came to it. But a few socialists, conspicuous among them the late Oskar Lange, turned back to the 1908 work of the Italian economist Barone, to construct a model of a socialist economy that would practice a systematic and decentralized evaluation and allocation of its resources. They showed that prices could be manipulated by government in such a way as to reflect the values that consumers put on consumer goods and services, and also to reflect the values of inputs in alternative uses. Their discussion of the pricing process under socialism clarified the useful functions that prices can perform. If, for goods and services in short supply, prices are systematically raised by government pricing authorities, the high prices can be taken as signals for increased production, while being at the same time at least temporary deterrents to consumption. Similarly, if prices are systematically lowered for goods in overabundant supply, the low prices can be taken as signals by producers to curtail supply, and by consumers to increase consumption.

Lange's 1936 exposition of these possibilities made it clear that prices could be systematically regulated to perform the signalling and evaluating functions even in the absence of those competing private sellers whose rivalry sets prices in a private enterprise economy. Moreover, his exposition demonstrated that prices so set permit a systematic comparison of alternative patterns of allocation, a comparison that would not be possible without prices of this kind.

If the development of the theory of market socialism made it clear that the market mechanism could serve socialism as well as capitalism, it nevertheless did not much interest the socialists of

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Western Europe or the planners of Communist Europe. For the market socialist had developed a model of a socialist economy that left very little room for central planning. Their socialist market mechanism was designed, as was the market mechanism of classical economics, to serve the preferences of individual consumers rather than the priorities of central planners. As in a capitalist economy, in this kind of market socialism the consumer remained sovereign – at a time when most socialists, planners, and Communists were looking for ways to effect collective purposes and national goals, rather than individual preferences. Although socialist theory considered harnessing the market mechanism to centrally determined priorities, it did not construct a persuasive case as to how it could be done.

In the Communist countries, the possibilities of market socialism were underrated for still other reasons. Communist ideology was antagonistic to the very idea of the market, hence inevitably to market socialism. Academic and professional Soviet economics was also antagonistic to the orthodox tradition in economic theory out of which the theory of market socialism sprang. Finally, with respect to formal planning and resource allocation, the overwhelming concern of Soviet policy was "balance" rather than what economists call optimality. Optimality involves a careful evaluation of returns to production in alternative lines. To Soviet planners, however, the need for big allocations to steel, electric power production, and national defense seemed obvious. Speaking very roughly, all that remained to be done was to insure that allocations for the rest of the economy were roughly consistent with, or in balance with, the crudely calculated but obviously necessary allocations to these high priority sectors. And even this formal interest in balance was secondary to their interest in the crude growth of physical output.

**The Market Mechanism for Centrally Determined Objectives:** – If the market mechanism was ever to be of any use for central planning, it had to be shown that prices could be set to reflect centrally determined values, and not merely individual consumer values. In the economics of the West, it has in fact long been clear that they can do so. For example, a subsidy to maritime shipping lines or to airmail carriers is a way of raising the price received by those who provide these transport services, thus signalling them to increase their production of the services. Similarly, a tax on liquor is a way of depressing the price received by manufacturers and distributors, hence a way of signalling them to restrict output. The result of these interventions – either subsidies or taxes – is to achieve a price that reflects both individual consumer preference *and* the preferences of governmental authorities.

A government can go even further – and in wartime often does.

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It can completely eliminate the effect on price of individual consumer demands so that producers respond to a price set entirely by government. This can be done either through the imposition of a legal price or by exclusive government purchase of commodities and services, after which government agencies either consume the purchased goods and services themselves or, in the case of consumer goods, redistribute them in some way to consumers.

Using the market mechanism in this way is an alternative to direct administrative control – to targets, quotas, physical allocations, specific instructions, etc. It is not always a good alternative, but it often is, since it is a way of manipulating incentives powerfully while leaving the actual decision – to produce or consume more or less – in the hands of the agency or enterprise whose price has been altered. Hence, a general virtue of the market mechanism as an instrument of central direction is that it permits extraordinary decentralization of detailed decision making.

To understand the possibility of subordinating the market mechanism to governmental rather than to individual choice, it is essential to distinguish between actions in which governments signal their production targets through prices, and actions in which they intervene in the market mechanism to alter the results without, however, actually using prices systematically as such a signalling device. To raise agricultural prices, for example, in order to stimulate agricultural production is a way of employing the market mechanism for the achievement of a centrally-determined goal of high agricultural production. On the other hand, to raise agricultural prices as part of a complex process of restricting farm output (as in the U.S.) is an entirely different kind of operation, in which direct administrative controls (such as acreage quotas) replace the market mechanism. Or again: depressing the price received by a manufacturer by imposing a tax on his output is a way of implementing a central decision to discourage consumption of the commodity, whereas the general imposition of legal maximum prices to control inflation has the effect of interfering with the market's ability to reflect either collective or individual choices and will ordinarily give rise to rationing, or to some other administrative device for the allocation of goods and services.

Perhaps it is the easy confusion of miscellaneous intervention in the pricing process (which the Communist economies have always practiced) with the skillful use of pricing to implement central planning of production that has contributed to Communist indifference to the latter. In any case, the Western demonstration that the market mechanism could be used to implement central priorities did not significantly affect Communist policy until certain other developments occurred. Even as late as 1950, the model of market socialism seem

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to be consigned to a limbo of interesting irrelevancies. Ideological barriers were still strong; so also was the obstacle of fundamental ignorance in Soviet economies about the pricing process.

**Yugoslavia:** — The Yugoslav economy was the one sensational exception to Communist indifference to the market mechanism. Yugoslav Communism was indigenous, not imposed by the U.S.S.R. as in the satellites generally. Political relations with the Soviet Union were such that in Yugoslavia independence in economic policy came to be valued rather than feared. Moreover, Yugoslav intellectuals and politicos had closer ties with their counterparts in the West than did any of the other Communist countries. Whatever the reasons, in 1952, recoiling from the inefficiencies of detailed administrative control over the economy, Yugoslavia brought into being a greatly decentralized market socialism. The change of direction, taken together with the rapid growth that ensued, excited much interest in the Communist world. The significance for Communism of the Yugoslav venture was greatly diminished on one score, however. For when the Yugoslavs abandoned detailed administrative control over the market mechanism they also went a long way toward consumer sovereignty as a replacement for the central direction of the economy. Hence, in the eyes of Communists elsewhere the Yugoslavs had largely abandoned central planning itself.

**New Freedom for Economic Inquiry:** — New possibilities for economics were opened up by Stalin's death in 1953. Soviet economists, engineers, and administrators could finally look with some freedom at the lessons to be learned from foreign experience with the market mechanism. One especially noteworthy gain for economic analysis was the lifting of Stalin's capricious ban on mathematical economics (input-output analysis, and linear programming, etc.).

Soviet mathematical economics, reaching back to work originating in the 1930's but not then pursued further, demonstrated independently of Western economics that pricing can be made useful to the planning of resource allocation even in the absence of any actual exchange between a buyer and seller. If we consider all the alternative combinations of end products that an economy can choose from, and all the alternative combinations of inputs that might be used to produce any given output, we see that there are vast possibilities of substitution — of one end product for another, and of one input for another. These possibilities of substitution can be represented by "substitution ratios" — and these substitution ratios can be expressed as a system of prices. (In the absence of any actual transaction in which a real price would be set, they are often called "shadow prices".) *Pricing turns out, therefore, to be implicit in the very logic of rational choice among alternative uses of resources.*

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This discovery clearly removes certain traditional ideological objections to market pricing, for it makes clear that pricing is not a capitalist invention but a logical aid to rational calculation even in circumstances far removed from capitalist buying and selling. Whether in fact the discovery has yet achieved this consequence for Soviet thought is not certain, however; for Soviet mathematical economists have, on the whole, drawn the inference, not that the market mechanism might now be more openly examined, but that such pricing as might be achieved through the market mechanism can in principle now better be achieved through further mathematical analysis and electronic computation.

The "in principle" is crucial, since a prodigious amount of information needs to be gathered and processed in order to substitute computers for actual markets; and so far the accomplishment is beyond the capacity of economists, Soviet or Western. Nor can it be said with confidence that there is any way to gather and test the required information except by putting consumers or planners in the position of actual choice in a real market. Still, the exploration of the practical mathematics of resource allocation is far from its maturity.

**The Rising Concern for Allocative Efficiency:** — In any case, the discovery of "shadow pricing" did not of itself overcome Communist disinclination to exploit the market mechanism. A final consideration was the growing complexity of the Soviet economy, with complexity outstripping admittedly growing Soviet competence in planning. The economy became more complex for at least two reasons: with the rising standard in living, the demand of consumers for varied and higher-quality consumer goods came to be more pressing; and with technological advance, alternative production possibilities became more numerous and complex. Soviet policy makers could no longer be satisfied with the simple mobilization of large quantities of capital, and the attendant mobilization of agricultural labor, for industry. As one student of the Soviet economy has written:

> "The Soviet economy again appears to be at a turning point. It is clear, as the debate shows, that it is becoming more and more difficult to plan *everything* centrally. The Soviet economy has grown not only in size, but in sophistication in concern for the consumer. As a result, campaigns and storming can no longer solve all the problems that arise. There are simply too many sectors which need attention. They can not all be manipulated from the center. It has been estimated that, if the economy continues its present growth, by 1980 the planning force will have to be thirty-six times its present size."

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It is especially noteworthy that the older Communist concern for "balance" is, in the face of this new complexity, no longer thought sufficient. It is increasingly difficult to find some clear superiority of one pattern for a few key industries over another alternative pattern. And that being so, Communist countries can no longer be satisfied with merely balancing the outputs and inputs of all other industries to satisfy a prior commitment to a few key programs. In short, consistency in an economic plan is no longer enough; optimality in a plan is now becoming a pressing objective. Hence, finally, the new interest in the market mechanism.

In their forthcoming study, *The Soviet Capital Stock 1928-1962,* Raymond P. Powell and Richard Moorsteen will document still another hypothesis to explain the new Soviet interest in improved resource allocation ("optimality"). The Soviet Union, they suggest, has been exhausting the possibilities for rapid growth through indefinitely larger and larger capital investment; it must now either find an alternative source of growth – i.e. a better allocation of resources – or resign itself to a lower growth rate.

**Paradox of Planning:** – How far the Communist economics will go in employing the market mechanism of course remains to be seen. An ideological and traditional resistance to the market mechanism does not quickly evaporate and presumably will never wholly evaporate. Moreover, a market mechanism is not always and universally a serviceable instrument for economic organization. Even in an economy like that of the U.S., in which ideology is all on the side of the market mechanism, its use has to be constrained by the recognition of its limitations.

In the Communist case, there remains one conspicuous obstacle to extending the employment of the market mechanism, sometimes referred to as the "paradox of planning." The problem can be posed this way: if the planners intend to use prices to signal production goals for the economy, they cannot set appropriate prices for end products until they first decide what quantities of various end products they desire. But they cannot intelligently decide on appropriate quantities of end products unless they know their costs, i.e., the resources used up in their production. Now, in a market mechanism, these costs are represented by prices; and this is to say that they cannot determine desired quantities of end products until they know prices. But we have just said that they cannot determine prices until they know what quantities of end products they desire!

This problem does not arise when the price mechanism is used to implement any single collective choice, as in a Western economy, because a decision, say, to expand the production of maritime transport services can take as given the relevant prices already prevailing

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on the market. Planning an increase in the production of no more than a few commodities or services does not so alter price relationships and production patterns for the entire economy as to invalidate prevailing prices as guide lines for the planners. But to plan, through pricing, a production pattern *for an entire economy* promises readjustments of prices that will invalidate the very set of prices that the planners depend upon for making their plans.

It follows that the fullest use of a market mechanism as an instrument for central planning would require that central planners actually operate, not directly through a master plan in which all major lines of production for the economy are simultaneously established, but through a large number of (and a series of) specific choices for each of all outputs or industries to be planned. When a choice is made for any output or industry, the outputs and prices for other industries need to be regarded – for planning purposes – as unchanged. To make the fullest use of the market mechanism, central planners need to work out a strategy for goal-setting and pricing (against a background of the overall general plan) that proceeds through many specific *and sequential* price and production decisions.

Such a procedure, it may be the case, is already in embryo in the Communist economies – even though, for lack of understanding of its utility, it is more often hidden than openly displayed. Given the complexity of the task of comprehensive, synoptic national economic planning, and given also the inevitable limits on man's intellectual capacities, even where these capacities are extended by electronic computation, planning all over the world tends to break down into clusters and sequences of specific decisions. The mere construction of detailed five-year plans does not prove that anyone or any organization has achieved an integrated synopsis of the elements of the plan; instead these plans are typically a collection of targets and policies from many sources.

## III

**The Rediscovery of the Market in the West:** – Outside the Communist orbit, an appreciation of the usefulness of the market mechanism has been most conspicuously on the rise since World War II. With good reason, the market was under great attack in the depression of the '30's, the severity of disillusionment with its usefulness nowhere more vivid than in the American NRA, an attempt at partial displacement of the market in favor of private and public administrative controls. But in the late '30's, Keynesian economics began to hold out the promise of ending depressions by improving rather than eliminating the market mechanism; and Western governments, learning the lesson, have in recent years sustained higher levels of employment than used to be thought possible. Similarly, taxation and transfer pay-

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ments, as well as provision of subsidized public goods like education, have attacked problems of inequality in income distribution – such problems can therefore no longer motivate proposals to disestablish the market mechanism. The result is that, in the West, the market mechanism is in better repute than ever before, as is indicated in the decline of socialist opposition to the market mechanism both on the continent and in Britain, where after World War II socialists deliberately subjected their newly nationalized enterprises to market controls rather than to the battery of administrative controls they had once contemplated. And the great event in Western European development in recent decades has been a substantial move toward unification, not through common government, flag, army, or language, but through the Common *Market*.

**The Developing Nations:** – As a group, the underdeveloped nations of the world are lagging in their understanding of the usefulness of the market mechanism. Abstractly, they should be eager to exploit every possibility for economic advance; in fact, they stand in a kind of backwater.

One reason is that their leaders and intellectuals are often prisoners of a once exciting but now stifling orthodoxy. Some of them are prisoners of early Marxian doctrine on planning, the very orthodoxy from which European Communism is escaping. Others are prisoners of English socialism of the style and date of Harold Laski, or even of earlier versions of English socialism – in either case antagonistic to the market mechanism. But times change: although Nehru was a prisoner of both, his daughter may turn out to be a prisoner of neither.

Another reason is, oddly enough, the insistence of the United States, the World Bank, and other lenders that underdeveloped countries formulate national economic plans in order to qualify for aid. They mean by a plan a balanced and consistent set of investment outlays. The effect is to divert some of the best brains in these countries away from high priority questions of growth strategy to the construction of reconciled investment programs reminiscent of those the Communist countries are trying to leave behind as inadequate. In India, for example, the question of the size and internal consistency of the five-year plans overshadows in public discussion, and in the attention it receives from experts in Indian government, many more rewarding questions of growth strategy, including such questions as how the market mechanism might be employed to hold out incentives to farmers to raise food production or how it might ration scarce foreign exchange in such a way as to substantially raise the level of economic achievement.

To be sure, just how much the underdeveloped economies should

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count on the market mechanism is subject to much dispute. The point being made here is only that the underdeveloped countries themselves do not well understand the issues, and have often not tumbled to the fact that, for many of the specific developmental problems they face, they can employ the market mechanism in tandem with other methods of controlling and planning economic development.

The prospect that the underdeveloped countries may take a new view of the market mechanism as an instrument of development planning is, of course, greatly enlarged by what they now see developing in Communist Europe. For even if they do not intend to follow the Communist path to development, the evidence that Western and Communist economies alike are finding the market mechanism useful is certain to impress them.

How they can best employ the market mechanism depends upon the particulars of their circumstances. But on a few counts a general usefulness of the market mechanism for these economies can be predicted. First, they all suffer desperately from a shortage of administrative skills and organization: they are not very competent in executing *any* kind of plan, economic or otherwise. Even the best of their civil services have developed procedures and traditions more suitable to keeping the peace than to stimulating economic development. Hence, on this score alone, they need the market mechanism more than do the advanced countries of the world.

Secondly, most of them have accumulated a mixed bag of administrative interventions in the market mechanism, such as price controls and exchange allocations, which have undercut the serviceability of the market mechanism without putting any positive administrative program in its place. To impose, for example, maximum prices on food grains in order to hold down the price of food in towns and cities saps the farmer's incentive to produce more. It takes away the monetary incentive and puts nothing in its place – it destroys one mechanism of development without substituting another.

Thirdly, while the development of an economy through administrative techniques furiously engages the energies of a planning elite, participation in development through the market mechanism is open to everyone and, indeed, typically engages most of the adult population. Cueing, signalling, rewarding, and penalizing through the market mechanism are methods of drawing on the largest possible number of responses – and, in addition, a method of extricating a traditional peasantry from older institutions and habits of life that retard development.

Fourthly – and here is a consideration of enormous importance to most underdeveloped countries – they need the market mechanism because they cannot take the route to rapid development that the Soviet Union took from the 1920's to the '60's. Foreswearing in that

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period any hope for skillful allocation of their resources, the Soviets instead counted on achieving growth through restricted consumption and massive investment. Their strategy worked because the restriction of consumption was in fact possible. It was possible for two reasons: the standard of living was high enough to permit forced savings, and the Soviet government was willing and able to use compulsion. In many underdeveloped countries, neither of these conditions holds; in some, only one does. In many cases, the surplus over and above what is essential to consumption is much smaller than in the Soviet case, where development proceeded from an already advanced stage of early industrialization and food availability. And in ever more cases neither effective systems for tax administration nor other instruments of compulsion are sufficient to gather the savings that are hypothetically available. Hence, except to the extent that capital assistance from abroad can take the place of forced savings and investment, these underdeveloped countries cannot successfully imitate the older Soviet pattern. They need to understand, as even the Soviet Union in its new condition is coming to understand, the indispensibility of a judicious use of the market mechanism for efficient use of the limited resources they can command.

**No Paradox for Planning:** – That the non-Communist underdeveloped nations can use the market mechanism to satisfy the individual needs of consumers is of course clear. But what of the usefulness of the market mechanism for implementing centrally-determined social priorities – to strengthen the industrial sector, for example, or to give a special push to agriculture, or to establish a steel-producing capacity? It follows from what was said above, about the paradox of planning, that it is just this kind of precise intervention for which the market mechanism is a demonstrably effective instrument of central planning. For this kind of *planning through selective intervention,* the paradox of planning does not arise; and no special techniques need to be devised to overcome it, as do need to be devised in the Communist countries of Europe. Hence, it turns out that the kind of "central planning" to which these underdeveloped economies are committed is the very kind for which the market mechanism is best suited.

## IV

That the market mechanism can be serviceable to planned and unplanned economies alike, to public and private enterprise alike, to collective and individual choice alike, is a discovery the significance of which may soon dwarf what we have seen of its consequences so far. To say this is not to take sides in the many disputes in many countries in which, for particular purposes at hand, the question has to be settled as to how far and under what circumstances market or-

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ganization ought to be pushed. It is only to take note of the fact that, although these disputes will remain, and although different countries will choose different combinations of the market and other forms of organization of economic life, the market mechanism is now everywhere coming to be recognized as a fundamental method of economic organization which no nation can ignore and which every nation can well afford to examine freshly. Even China, bent on its own course, may come to be caught up in the movement toward the market. For lack of experience with, and personnel for, direct administration, China has perhaps gone less far in disestablishing the market under Communism than its ideological claims would suggest. If so, we may be witnessing a race in China between an old-fashioned Marxian determination to undermine the market as soon as administrative competence permits and a growing sophistication about the market's usefulness – with the result unpredictable, if momentous.

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# P P B S comes to Washington

VIRGINIA HELD

In May, 1966, all departments and most agencies of the U.S. government, in submitting to the Budget Bureau their rough spending plans for the fiscal year starting fourteen months later, began using for the first time the Planning-Programing-Budgeting System, or PPBS. The change has its source in the summer of 1965, when Lyndon B. Johnson ordered them to institute what he called a "revolutionary" new system, one which demands that departments and agencies define clearly the major objectives (or "programs") which they choose to pursue, that they apply systematic analyses to the alternative ways in which these objectives are being – or may be – sought, and that they plan their spending in long-range as well as one-year-ahead terms. This doesn't sound very revolutionary; indeed, it sounds merely sensible. Oddly enough, it may actually be both.

## Rand and the D. O. D.

In initiating this new approach, the President is applying throughout the government an approach toward more rational decision-making which has already swept through the Defense Department. "Program budgeting" was introduced into the Department of Defense in 1961. Previously, defense expenditures had been considered in traditional line-item form, focusing on categories such as maintenance, supplies, personnel, and equipment; and the budget presented by the Secretary of Defense was really a combination of Army, Navy, and Air Force budgets. The deficiencies, as explained by Alain

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C. Enthoven, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Analysis, were that the whole question of how much a weapon system *cost* was not brought in systematically, either to determine the feasibility of the program or to evaluate its efficiency. By 1960 it was apparent that the troublesome decisions of the Defense Department centered around the choice of vast weapon systems, each enormously expensive, designed for various military missions (such as strategic retaliation and continental defense). In order to be able to consider the "worth" of a weapon system as a whole, and to relate longer range planning to annual budgets, the Defense Department's comptroller, Charles J. Hitch, at Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's direction, instituted a new system of program budgeting. The U.S. defense effort has, as a result, been broken down into nine basic "programs": Strategic Retaliatory Forces, Continental Air and Missile Defense Forces, General Purpose Forces, Airlift and Sealift Forces, Reserve and National Guard Forces, Research and Development, General Support, Military Assistance, and Civil Defense. Each is composed of certain "program elements" (such as Polaris submarines and Minutemen missiles) which are intended to accomplish a common military mission.

The groundwork for the reorganization of the Defense Department budget had been laid by several studies. The Hoover Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government had made a general recommendation in its 1949 report that the government adopt a budget based upon functions, activities, and projects – which it designated a "performance budget." David Novick of the RAND Corporation presented in 1954 a systematic exposition of how the new technique could be applied effectively to military spending. In his RAND study, called *Efficiency and Economy in Government Through New Budgeting Procedures,* and on subsequent occasions, Novick proposed a method of "program budgeting" and recommended its adoption by the Defense Department. The Committee for Economic Development issued a policy statement in 1955, called *Control of Federal Government Expenditures,* also advocating a refashioning of the entire federal budget along "program" lines. The term "program," as then used by the Bureau of the Budget, designated combinations of activities, such as procurement of equipment, training of personnel, and so forth, rather than their objectives. With the 1954 RAND study for the Defense Department, however, the term "program" came to mean the ultimate goal of many interdependent activities.

When Charles Hitch first took office as Defense Department Comptroller in 1961, he expected to introduce program budgeting over a period of several years. But McNamara speeded up the process and decided that the budget for fiscal 1963 should be formulated in

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terms of major programs and weapon systems. The results of this reorganization, and of the evaluations it has made possible, led to recommendations that the approach be extended to civilian affairs. David Novick suggested that RAND conduct research on the government-wide applicability of program budgeting; this led to a collection of papers edited by Novick, and recently published by Harvard University Press under the title, *Program Budgeting – Program Analysis and the Federal Budget,* and the advice "to introduce into the nondefense areas of the federal government the kind of program analysis that has been installed in the Department of Defense as an integral part of the planning, programming, and budgeting process." In line with this and other recommendations, the government is now in the process of doing just this.

**The role of the budget**

Since every governmental program is only as extensive as the money put into it, the place where the decisions – whether rational or not – over how to divide up the national effort are most apparent, is in the federal budget. The budget is the central expression of how the government's finite resources will be allocated, the terms of the annual cease-fire, as it were, within the executive branch, between the competing claims of different advocates for more money for defense, or agriculture, or new welfare programs.

Once the amounts have been fixed in the budget, which the President will then present to Congress, the major decisions have for the most part been made. Congress can, of course, upset the settlement temporarily by decreasing or increasing some aspects of some programs, and dissatisfied agencies can breach the cease-fire and help one congressional faction or another. But as George A. Steiner puts it in his chapter of the recent RAND study, "despite the wide publicity frequently given to changes made by the Congress in the budget presented by the President, important alterations are usually relatively few and minor." Hence it is in the executive process of putting together a budget that the impact of the new approach will be most apparent.

The greater part of a federal budget is what it is because of what it was. All those programs already made mandatory – such as farm price supports or veterans' pensions – have to be paid for. Defense expenditures, which have used up over half of the total of federal expenditures for the past 15 years, have not changed drastically from year to year. The region of discretion, then, is distinctly limited. But as in other human affairs, it is those few decisions that are open to conscious choice which cause anguish. And it is to the resolution of such anguish that the new intellectual techniques are directed.

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### What is a program?

Establishing just what a program may or may not be involves the conceptual distinguishing and grouping of various objectives and activities; alternative conceptualizations are always possible, and are often floating about. Charles Hitch and Roland McKean, whose book *The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age* (published as a paperback last year by Atheneum) has become a classic in its field, discussed the problem of discerning a defense program: "Let us illustrate the distinction between a program and an object [of expenditure]. . . . Certain activities of the Air Force, the Army, and the Navy produce retaliatory striking power or deterrence, and these activities might be grouped together and called a program. In providing deterrence, the Services use missiles, manpower, food, paper clips, and transportation – intermediate items which might be called 'objects of expenditure.' . . .

"Just what one means by an 'end-product' or a 'program' is not unambiguous. The line of demarcation between programs and objects is not clear-cut. Is the Military Air Transport Service a program or simply an activity supporting, say, the Tactical Air Program? Or is even the latter merely something to be purchased for a program that might be called 'deterrence and fighting of limited wars'? Even such tasks as providing nuclear striking power and providing forces for limited war have interrelationships. Neither is solely a supporting activity of the other, yet each can influence the credibility and effectiveness of the other. It may seem that one is driven to regard every military item and activity as an object purchased for and contributing to one program – national security.

"Despite these complexities, officials do find it helpful to think in terms of several programs, and there is hope of developing categories that will be even more meaningful. After all, our only chance of pondering the gains as well as the costs of defense budgets is to think in terms of rather broad aggregations of activities."

The Defense Department budget has thus been divided into the nine major programs already mentioned and over 800 "program elements," which are the forces, weapons, or support systems, and other types of integrated activities by means of which the programs are to be achieved. But the possibilities for regrouping are almost endless.

Officials trying to decide what to consider part of and what to exclude from various civilian programs face analogous difficulties. Education, for instance, is one of the most dispersed activities of the government. In the fiscal 1965 budget, funds for education were dispersed through more than forty agencies. The U.S. Office of Education's expenditures constituted only about one-fifth of the total federal education budget, and efforts are only now under way to

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distinguish what could be conceived of as *the* education program of the federal government.

A member of the executive involved with the new system has said that the president's directive on program budgeting is forcing some agencies to consider, virtually for the first time, just what their objectives are. Officials of the Justice Department, for example, being lawyers, traditionally think it is their clients, not they themselves, who have objectives. But formulations of what the Department of Justice is trying to do are now being considered in terms of such categories as reduction and prevention of crime, protection of internal security, assurance of civil rights under law, maintenance of competition in the business community, and so on.

Melvin Anshen, in the opening chapter of RAND's *Program Budgeting* sums up the scope of the undertaking:

"The central issue is, of course, nothing less than the definition of the ultimate objectives of the federal government as they are realized through operational decisions. Set in this framework, the designation of a schedule of programs may be described as building a bridge between a matter of political philosophy (what is government for?) and the administrative function of assigning scarce resources among alternative governmental objectives. The unique function of a program budget is to implement the conclusions of a political philosophy through the assignment of resources to their accomplishment . . . In a number of areas no clear objectives have ever been laid down. This undesirable condition has prevailed in the field of international aid and investment, but it can also be found in many domestic areas including, among others, agriculture, transportation, education, and unemployment."

One problem which may become troublesome is that of frankness. How honest can an agency be in declaring its intentions without getting into difficulties, how open about its criteria of evaluation? If the Department of Agriculture, for instance, is trying to shift a lot of people out of farming, will it be wise to advertise this objective? If the State Department values a program that induces in the leaders of foreign countries a healthy respect for U.S. power, should it say so in a public analysis? How much program budgeting may aggravate "the honesty problem" remains to be seen.

## The end of absolutes

The importance of thinking in program terms is that, in addition to clarifying objectives, it helps move discussion away from the fairly useless absolutes of (a) what fixed amounts of money to spend no matter what the goals, or (b) what fixed objectives to achieve no matter what the costs.

Starting out with an immovable sum, and deciding how to spend

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it makes little sense for an entity such as the U. S. Government. (It appeared to be the favored approach of President Eisenhower's Budget Director, Maurice Stans, who liked to tell Department Secretaries to be sure not to exceed certain fixed amounts of money in their requests.) Critics of this approach point out that since revenues are subject to being increased, it should be acknowledged that, if the nation's security requires stronger defenses, or its soundness a program to combat unemployment, no fixed amount of spending should be imposed as a precondition to which all subsequent decisions must conform.

But the opposite approach, taking needs or objectives as thoroughly immovable, is no more satisfactory. Congressmen often ask military officials to tell them, honestly, what they "really need." Senator Chavez, for instance, said to General Maxwell Taylor, in Congressional hearings on appropriations for Eisenhower's defense program, "We would like to know what you need and not what the Budget Bureau thinks you should have." The question, however, in isolation, is unanswerable. If money is no problem at all, some people need Cadillacs and caviar pretty badly, and generals and department heads are no exception. Governments, like individuals, traditionally find ways to spend what is available.

Alan Peacock and Jack Wiseman, in their book *The Growth of Public Expenditure in the United Kingdom*, published in 1961, tried to assess the validity of the "law" of ever-increasing state expenditures formulated by the German economist Adolph Wagner in 1883. Wagner had said, on the basis of observations of Western European countries, that pressures for social progress inevitably lead to increasing state activity and hence to a growth of governmental expenditures, and that "in the long run the desire for development of a progressive people will always overcome . . . financial difficulties." Peacock and Wiseman found upon analyzing British figures that it seemed to be the other way around: expenditures increase because revenues increase. With a given tax system and constant tax rates, government revenues grow as the economy grows, and governments arrange to use up their incomes. But discovering which is cause and which effect may be less important than acknowledging the disutility of taking the levels of either revenues or expenditures as absolute in trying to make the decisions that a federal budget transfixes.

Explaining the point with regard to defense plans, Hitch and McKean say:

"There is no budget size or cost that is correct regardless of the payoff, and there is no need that should be met regardless of cost.

"On the one hand, there is no presumption that the defense budget is now, or should be, near any immovable upper limit. As far as physical and economic feasibility is concerned, national security

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expenditures could be raised (within a two- or three-year transition period) by, say, $30 billion per year. With appropriate changes in tax rates and monetary policy, this could be done without causing severe inflation.

"From existing levels, in other words, outlays for defense activities can be raised if we really want to raise them – if we feel that we need extra defense programs more than other things."

"On the other hand," Hitch and McKean continue, "there is no particular national security program that we need in an absolute sense. . . . A list of the 'desirable' items that could strengthen our defense would be almost endless. Where does one draw the line [without reference to cost] between what is needed and what is not? There are no clear-cut 'minimal' needs, either for defense as a whole or for particular programs. . . . Outlays for various programs *can* be cut if we feel that we need other things even more. It is up to us to choose."

**The methods of choice**

Along with facilitating an awareness of the objectives to be sought, PPBS provides for the application of a battery of new techniques, such as systems analysis and cost-benefit analysis, to try to increase the possibilities of making rational choices between alternative means of pursuing these objectives. The terms used to designate these techniques are not yet at a stage of precise definition. As Gene H. Fisher states in his chapter on "cost-utility analysis," the term he favors, in the RAND study on program budgeting, the terms "cost-benefit analysis," "cost-effectiveness analysis," "systems analysis," "operations research," and "operations analysis" all "convey the same general meaning but have important different meanings to different people."

David Novick explains one important distinction: "Cost-effectiveness analysis of alternative forces and weapon systems . . . stems basically from operations research in World War II. But operations research is concerned with the analysis of alternative tactics with basically given weapon systems [e.g. in bombing a bridge, whether to go across it or down the middle], while the emphasis in cost-effectiveness analysis is on forward planning. Freedom to allocate one's resources is usually severely limited in typical problems of operations research, whereas the purpose of cost-effectiveness analysis is to examine the effects of such alternative resource allocations. . . ."

While these techniques remain in their present healthy state of disorderly and inventive and sometimes exuberant development, precise definitions may be of less interest than a few glimpses at how they may be shaped and used in specific decision-making situations.

One of the most useful books for this purpose, partly because of

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its conceptual openness, is a collection of papers edited by Robert Dorfman under the title *Measuring Benefits of Government Investments* (Washington, D.C., The Brookings Institution, 1965). The authors attempt to expand and apply cost-benefit concepts to various areas of federal and local governmental activity, such as providing outdoor recreation, preventing high-school drop-outs, investing in highways, and undertaking urban renewal, where questions of how to quantify social 'costs' and 'benefits' become crucial. "It is no accident," the editor explains, "that benefit-cost analysis had its origin and highest development in the field of water resources. That is the field in which . . . the highest proportion of outputs – water and power – are saleable commodities bearing relevant market prices." This volume steers clear of the relatively easy cases of dams and levees, where costs and benefits are more quantifiable in terms of money, and enters foggier territory. Dorfman notes that the book's "preoccupation with conceptual problems and comparative neglect of technical expedients is probably a symptom of the youngness of the field. . . . The work of extending the methods of benefit-cost analysis and of criticizing and appraising these extensions has only just begun."

For the purpose of grasping a few basic concepts of cost-benefit analysis, however, it may be useful to revert to reservoirs for a moment and to look at one simple case offered by Otto Eckstein, who has written two books on cost-benefit analysis in connection with water resource development. In his little book *Public Finance* (Prentice-Hall, 1964), he gives the following table showing, for a Brink Valley, estimated flood damage without protection in a typical year and the lowered damage figures with progressively more ambitious flood protection plans:

| Plan | Annual Cost of Project | Average Annual Damage | Benefit (Reduction of Damage) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Without protection | 0 | $38,000 | 0 |
| Plan A – levees | $ 3,000 | 32,000 | $ 6,000 |
| Plan B – small reservoir | 10,000 | 22,000 | 16,000 |
| Plan C – medium reservoir | 18,000 | 13,000 | 25,000 |
| Plan D – large reservoir | 30,000 | 6,000 | 32,000 |

With all plans, benefits exceed costs, but it is Plan C that is the best one because with it the marginal benefit of going from the lesser plan to it continues to exceed the marginal cost of spending the extra money. Although it costs $8,000 more than Plan B, it will avert $9,000 worth more of damages. But a further increment, going to Plan D, would cost an extra $12,000, yet yield only $7,000 in additional benefits. Hence it would fail the test of having marginal benefits exceed marginal costs.

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In the Dorfman volume, a paper by Ruth P. Mack and Sumner Myers, of the Institute of Public Administration and National Planning Association, respectively, attempts to provide an analysis in cost-benefit terms that could be used to evaluate governmental expenditures on outdoor recreation. Benefits are calculated on the basis of what the authors call "merit-weighted user-days," which take into account various sorts of recreation for various sorts of people under varying conditions. The simple measure of "user-days" – a function of the numbers of people expected to use a park and of the lengths of time of their stays – is weighted to take account of evaluations that some user-days are better than others. The weighted figures include such judgments of social merit as that a day spent by a child in the wilderness has more lasting value than an adult's picnicking in a crowded, noisy park; that the marginal utility of additional recreation declines as larger amounts are made available; that equity requires government to provide relatively more recreational opportunities to those who most need them and can least afford private alternatives, plus many others. In ways too complex to examine here, alternative parks under consideration for a given expected number of users are then evaluated in terms of the "merit-weighted user-days" which they could be expected to provide.

Hitch and McKean in their book present conceptual frameworks, together with a mathematical appendix which becomes impossible for the non-specialist, for choices between alternative military forces. In a simplified hypothetical example, they take a situation with one input, say a fixed budget of B billion dollars and two possible outputs. A planner is assumed to be deliberating about what proportion of the B billion dollars to spend on a strategic bombing force and what proportion on an air defense force. Using enemy targets that could be destroyed and the number of attacking enemy bombers that could be shot down as the two outputs to which he would attach values, the planner could construct a curve showing maximum combinations which could be bought with the B billion dollars. Each point on the curve then represents an "efficient" use of resources, because at any point on it, it is possible to increase one valuable output only by decreasing the other. To select a point on the curve representing the "optimal" use of his budget amount, a planner needs what the economists call "indifference curves" to intersect it. Indifference curves reflect preferences for some combinations of target destruction and kill potential over others. The optimal point is a point of intersection of the original curve with as high an indifference curve as possible.

In many actual situations, an analysis can only yield calculations on efficient systems; trying to choose optimal ones may largely require reliance on intuitive judgment. But the range within which such judgment must be made can often be narrowed.

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One of the central problems of any analysis is the choice of a criterion, or test of preferredness, which suggests the best combination of things distinguished as desirable. Simultaneously maximizing gain while minimizing cost looks appealing, but is no criterion because, as Hitch and McKean point out, "there is no such policy" as one that would accomplish it. "Maximum gain is infinitely large, and minimum cost is zero. Seek the policy that has that outcome, and you will not find it." One common preference is to choose that policy which has the highest ratio of "effectiveness," or achievement of objectives assumed to be desirable, to cost. The maximizing of this ratio is then the criterion, but choices should be bounded by common sense from extreme forms, as for instance in overkill situations. It often happens that the ratio reduces itself to maximum effectiveness for a given budget.

What are usually required are analyses that straddle a problem, that calculate what, given a certain scale of objectives, can minimize costs, or that calculate what, given assumed amounts of money to spend, can maximize achievements. Which formulation to use, here as in other deliberations, tends to depend on which it seems more feasible to choose intuitively 'reasonable' levels for.

An example of an analysis that is to be made when the data is in, as the use of analytic techniques expands from the Defense Department, where most actual analyses are classified, to other areas of government, is an evaluation of the Office of Economic Opportunity's Job Corps and Neighborhood Youth Corps. The two corps are alternative ways of pursuing certain of the Poverty Program's objectives. The Job Corps takes youngsters and puts them in residential camps, keeping them there 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It teaches them to read and write, and it trains them for a job. The Neighborhood Youth Corps takes youngsters of the same age group, and gives them work for 35 hours a week, paying them the minimum wage. They live at their own homes. Although very different, and designed for different kinds of enrollees, the objective of both organizations is to make youngsters employable, and attempts can be made to measure their relative effectiveness.

It is known already that the Job Corps costs about four times as much per youth as the Neighborhood Youth Corps. "The large differential in costs," an OEO working memorandum states, "makes assessment of payoff critical. It is, for example, estimated that $100 increase in annual income, discounted at 5%, justifies the expenditure of $1,500 in training." Although economic considerations need not constitute the basis on which a decision to expand or decrease either program is made, they are at least worth looking into in planning future efforts to combat poverty.

Kermit Gordon, a former member of the Council of Economic

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Advisers, and Budget Director under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, has recently suggested a series of possible applications of economic analysis to existing governmental programs. One suggestion is for an evaluation of the program the U. S. has for sugar. "The U. S. sugar program," Gordon says, "incorporates import quotas, domestic production quotas, import duties, an excise tax on sugar refining, and graduated subsidies to U. S. cane and beet sugar producers. Over the years, the program has been used to promote increased domestic production at the expense of imports. On the average, over the past decade or so, domestic prices have been roughly double the world price of sugar. The present combined costs to the U. S. Government and to the U. S. sugar consumer of our sugar program have been estimated at about $500 million a year; that is, we spend on sugar about $500 million more than we would spend if there were no U. S. sugar program. (This does not include the federal subsidy for irrigation water to sugar beet growers.) Estimated net income of all U. S. cane and beet growers is about $140 million per annum. Thus, the total cost of the program is more than three times the net income of producers.

"Presumably," Gordon continues, "the purpose of the program is to support the incomes of U. S. sugar growers and to assure to U. S. consumers a reliable supply of sugar at relatively stable prices. It should not exceed the talents of economists to devise alternative programs which would achieve these objectives at substantially lesser costs than the present program."

One of the most imaginative attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of programs with hard-to-assess objectives is a method devised by David Osborn, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Built into this system, which is being programmed by the Franklin Institute Research Laboratory in Philadelphia, is the view that the agency's various activities have multiple and overlapping objectives, and that a conceptual structure delineating end programs aimed at through alternative means does not adequately reflect such overlapping. Osborn recommends a scheme of cross-multiplying the costs of the activities with a number representing the rank of its objectives on a scale. For instance, the exchange of Fulbright professors may contribute to "cultural prestige and mutual respect," "educational development," and gaining "entree," which might be given scale numbers such as 8, 6, and 5, respectively. These numbers are then multiplied with the cost of the program, and the resulting figure is in turn multiplied with an ingenious figure called a "country number." The latter is an attempt to get a rough measure of the importance to the U. S. of the countries with which we have cultural relations. It is arrived at by putting together in complicated ways certain key data, weighted to reflect cultural and

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educational matters, such as the country's population, Gross National Product, number of college students, rate of illiteracy, and so forth. The resulting numbers are then revised in the light of working experience, as when, because of its high per capita income, a certain tiny middle-eastern country turns out to be more important to the U. S. than a large eastern European one. At this point, country numbers are revised on the basis of judgment and experience, as are other numbers at other ponts. But those who make such revisions have a basic framework to start with, a set of numbers arranged on the basis of many factors, rather than single arbitrary guesses. As Osborn explains it: "We debate the numerical results we come up with but it becomes a revision process. The analysis gives us approximations to work with. If you break up your judgment into various parts you have something to talk about."

Because of the imaginative, and sometimes conceptually playful nature of these techniques, which nearly all agree still constitute an art rather than a science, critics sometimes contend that the attempt to assign numerical values to such amorphous objectives as what an educational exchange program is aiming at, or what urban renewal is trying to accomplish, are of little use, and may be misleading. Misused, the techniques may lead to a focus on less important but measurable factors, such as dollar costs and miles of highway constructed, let us say, and to the neglect of less quantifiable factors such as the social and aesthetic costs and benefits of programs.

One point of such analyses may be, however, that when many guesses go into a calculation, the deficiency of any one of them is less crucial than if the only thing guessed at, intuitively, is the outcome, such as that exchanging professors is more valuable than exchanging dance troupes, or that programs for pre-schoolers will do more to ease poverty than money spent on housing.

William Gorham, an Assistant Secretary in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and an economist who recently moved up from the Defense Department to introduce into HEW the kind of analyses that have been helpful in resolving defense decision problems, finds non-quantifiable considerations already so profuse in an agency such as HEW that there is hardly a danger for some time of introducing too much calculation.

In efforts such as those to prevent high-school drop-outs, for instance, about all that is known now is how much is being spent. To evaluate them one has to specify objectives – which may not amount to doing away with dropping-out altogether – and then to compare the merits of achieving different levels of high-school education. One of the principal benefits of finishing high school is the higher expected earning capacity of graduates. The more that is spent to reduce the drop-out rate, the greater the expected income of the

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population. Looked at in this way, the economic benefits and costs of achieving different levels of high school completion can be compared and can at least help determine the efficacy of such programs.

Gorham says of his experience in dealing with military problems that the dominant characteristics in a decision are often not those that can be measured, but if one does what is possible with numbers, it leads those involved in a decision to be clear about the non-or less-quantifiable factors on which the decision may be based, and such an influence is often useful.

## The locus of decision

The problems of defining what is rational and what is not and of deciding whether rational choices – if possible at all – are better than those made on the basis of intuitive feelings, involve high-level philosophical complexities. But to assert that it is advisable to know what one is doing may be a modest claim susceptible of general approval. What the new intellectual techniques, such as those used in PPBS, attempt to provide are methods by which those who make the decisions about how the government should direct its efforts can increase their awareness of the conditions and consequences of their choices and can clarify the elements that, explicitly or implicitly, enter into their judgments.

Various unforseeable and irrational factors will continue, sometimes rightly, to influence final decisions. And debates about just which sorts of considerations *are* the rational ones are bound to remain lively. Congress, for instance, may cut an unpopular engineering project which the Department of the Interior declares rewarding, or, because of the pressures upon it, vote more money for a given defense component than Administration calculations deem effective. A department head may override his professional advisers for political reasons, good or bad. But the knowledge which the new techniques can provide may be used to raise the contests over such issues to a more responsible level. And those who object to the language of game-playing and payoff may simply not yet have understood the extent to which these techniques can embody a distinctively moral concern for alternative values.

Several of those RAND and Defense Department alumni now preparing to apply quantitative analyses to broader domains have made the point that the factors to be considered are probably more measurable in the case of domestic programs than in the case of defense. It is at least easier to measure jobs created, or numbers of people moved across an income figure taken as a "poverty line," than it is to measure "deterrence."

Joseph Kershaw, now analyzing poverty programs, recently compared the problem for the two fields. He finds it easier to make such

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analyses for poverty programs because there is already so much information available – population and income and other statistics – even though the information is often not quite what one wants. He thinks objectives are somewhat easier to define, and to quantify, for the poverty program than for the defense program, and furthermore, he observes, "we're playing the game against nature, whereas the Defense Department is playing, of course, against a very active player, or coalition of players," who can design their policies to confound those of the United States, and this "makes it possible for us to do things with more confidence than the Defense Department can."

To the extent that various forces lead those with political power to look to those with expert knowledge for advice on ways to increase the effectiveness with which government pursues its objectives, and thus to rationalize its efforts, the role of new intellectual techniques such as PPBS is likely to grow. And as the influence of government in shaping the national society continues to expand, any possible improvement in its capacity to make "better" choices becomes more significant.

There appears to have been in recent years a significant shift in the kind of advice the politicians call upon most. The supervisory outlook of New Deal government, shaped by lawyers apt to think in terms of governmental regulation and control of the nation's enterprises, has receded. Those that seem to have come to the fore are the economists, who think in terms of the effective management and development not only of the American economy but of the enterprise of government itself.

Participants in governmental decisions concede that foolish and wasteful choices are often made simply because those who make them do not know many of the things intelligent analyses can tell them. Yet even if those holding a political power of decision which continues to be primary develop no greater good-will nor desire to be rational, increased reliance upon the new techniques remains probable because, as Kermit Gordon expresses it, "analyses become powerful weapons in the arsenal of persuasion," as political wills confront one another and grapple toward resolution.

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*REVIEW ESSAY*

# Marshall McLuhan: Double Agent

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

MARSHALL MCLUHAN began as a literary scholar, an English professor, a free-roving speculative intellectual. His writings were to be found in the best intellectual quarterlies. The range of his erudition and the brillance of his ideas were beyond cavil.

His first book, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man,* published in 1951, consists of 50 glosses on texts taken from the mass media, nearly all advertisements from magazines. The glosses are charged with intelligence, but also with moral outrage. "That man counts himself happy today whose school training wins him the privilege of getting at once into the technological meat grinder. That is what he went to school for. And what if he does have the consistency of hamburger after a few years? Isn't everybody else in the same shape? Hamburger is also more manageable than beef cuts." In 1962 he published *The Gutenberg Galaxy.* The book is the best of his three for several reasons. In it he contemplates such literary texts as *Don Quixote,* and the notions these texts stimulate in him are a good deal more interesting than the notions provoked by, say, the table of contents of *The Reader's Digest* for August, 1947 (one of the texts glossed in his first book). It employs his scholarship coherently; at least a fourth of it consists of quotations from other speculative scholarly intellectuals of the first order, so that you have the reassuring feeling that McLuhan is adding to a substantial body of intelligent opinion rather than exploding on his own. In it, he also cleared his prose of his earlier too easy tone of moral outrage. ("Value judgments have long been allowed to create a moral fog around technological change such as renders understanding impossible.") Perhaps most important, in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* he contained the messianic fervor which he later gave way to. The ideas (and a lot of the examples) are much the same as in the first book; his moral intentions are unmistakable ("Is it not possible to emancipate ourselves from the subliminal operation of our own technologies? Is not the essence of education civil defense against media fall-out?"), and while his tone is often prophetically arrogant ("Cultures can rise far above civilization artistically but without the phonetic alphabet they remain tribal, as do the Chinese and Japanese."), what he intends to accomplish in this book is still, for him, modest. "A few decades hence

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it will be easy to describe the revolution in human perception and motivation that resulted from beholding the new mosaic mesh of the TV image. Today it is futile to discuss it at all." (Two years, not two decades, later, in his next book he discusses this subject at great length.) One result of the relatively calm qualities of *The Gutenberg Galaxy* is that, when he drops one of his idea-bombs, it has a more or less rational context to qualify it, to give it meaning, and it does not lose its distinctiveness by being only one of dozens of block-busters scattered about promiscuously. "The unconscious is a direct creation of print technology, the ever-mounting slag-heap of rejected awareness." An idea like that needs room to blow up in, lots of pages on both sides to cushion its effect in the reader's mind. This idea is not given nearly enough room, but it gets some; and anyway the book isn't boobytrapped with so many loaded notions but what you can manage to get through it in one piece, if you're lucky.

Then in 1964 came *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Scholarship dwindled, messianism magnified, and the book sells like crazy. Marshall McLuhan has become a power in the land. There are a good many intellectual messiahs among us these days, none of them very impressive; Norman O. Brown, for example, is faddish. But McLuhan is in my opinion much the most powerful. Brown's nostalgia for Innocence (polymorphous perverse sexuality for everybody), free from the incursions of the Devil (inhibition), is hardly worth mentioning except as one more instance of Rousseauistic utopianism. That he has a following is mildly interesting, but I doubt that his teachings will lead to anything much graver than programmatic fondling, than which we have more disturbing prospects now before us; besides, it's good material for satire. McLuhan's teaching, however, is radical, new, animated by high intelligence, and capable of moving people to social action. If he is wrong, it matters.

IT IS not possible to give a rational summary of McLuhan's ideas, for two reasons: the attitude and tone of his writing is at least as important as the ideas themselves, and to systematize these ideas, even in outline, would be to falsify their nature and impact. His writing is deliberately anti-logical: circular, repetitious, unqualified, gnomic, outrageous. "It was thanks to the print that Dickens became a comic writer." Absurd! Still, maybe there's something to it? It's worth thinking about at least. — Good McLuhan.

Though his ideas do not compose a system, they are a recognizable complex. They are about the ways in which the media — a term he stretches until it includes language and technology — extend and alter our means of perception and communication and thereby affect our nature. In his earlier writings, he, the good English professor, was appalled by what he observed in the mass media. But gradually he came to believe that the vulgarity, immorality, and imbecility which characterize so very much of what the media (apparently) communicate to the masses are really of secondary importance. "The

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medium is the message." That is to say, what is communicated has much less effect on us than the means by which it is communicated. For example, he attributes to the introduction of movable type a "galaxy" of changes in Western man's consciousness, making it possible for us to act without reacting and thereby engendering extreme specialization of social function and a sort of cultural schizophrenia; his argument in support of this thesis is formidable, illuminating albeit extreme, and all his own. He attributes equally extensive changes to the electronic media, especially TV; in gauging the effect of TV on our nature, he says, the fact that TV images are made mosaically and simplify their subjects to cartoons is incomparably more important than whether the program content is intelligent or stupid, in good taste or bad, honest or meretricious. His TV argument is as brilliant and original as his movable-type argument, and it stirs one to thought about a subject which needs to be thought about. For this one is grateful to him, as one is grateful for many isolated insights. But one is not grateful for the argument as a whole; pretending to be a forecast based on solid fact, it is mostly a wishful prophecy deriving from apocalyptic vision.

Things are changing so fast, he says, that we must control the media right now, not a moment to lose, if they are not to destroy us:

> The mark of our time is its revulsion against imposed patterns. We are suddenly eager to have things and people declare their beings totally. There is a deep faith to be found in this new attitude – a faith that concerns the ultimate harmony of all being. Such is the faith in which this book has been written. It explores the contours of our own extended beings in our technologies, seeking the principle of intelligibility in each of them. In the full confidence that it is possible to win an understanding of these forms that will bring them into orderly service, I have looked at them anew, accepting very little of the conventional wisdom concerning them.

Exactly how these forms are to be brought into "orderly service" is never made clear. The omission of this *how* becomes enormously important: we are being altered by TV and the other electronic media; all we have to do is to control them (but *how?*) in order to achieve the wholeness we have long lacked.

It is easy to see why McLuhan is listened to so eagerly: with the highest of intellectual credentials, he sounds like a Future-salesman assuring us that there are great days ahead and that what seems to be so terrible now arises only from resistance to change. What if admen do use TV as a way to spread lies and distortions and idiocy? It doesn't matter much anyway: the medium is the message, and a medium is neither moral nor immoral. All in our culture are being changed by TV, those who don't watch as well as the addicts, so why not watch? Don't resist, don't be obsolete before your time, move with the age. In plain words, Progress, with Utopia in view. An electronic Chiliasm. The Millenium now.

In itself, McLuhan's vision matters little more than Norman O.

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Brown's. It is not hard, really, to say, "I'm for civilization, growing up, heterosexual love-making with and without orgasms, cities, and language," then shove those two mantics into their earthly paradises and lock the gates on them. But McLuhan is carefully listened to by admen (who never expected it would be an English professor that would *justify them!*), and he has followers in education, some of whom are influential. Two that I have met are Sister Jacqueline, President of Webster College in St. Louis, and Father Walter Ong, professor of English at the University of St. Louis, where McLuhan taught for seven years. Sister Jacqueline is a very active member of a committee which advises the Office of Education and the President. This committee is under the chairmanship of Jerrold Zacharias, the physicist in good part responsible for the reforms in the teaching of physics and mathematics in the schools, and it is now engaged in devising experiments for the improvement of every sort of teaching. One subcommittee consists of writer-teachers; it divided into conservatives like me who believe that the schools can and should primarily be concerned to teach writing and reading, and progressives who believe that the schools should build upon the children's own oral language, each child making a tradition of himself, and should use all possible electronic audio-visual aids. Two of the progressives are the novelists John Hawkes and Albert Guerard, Jr., who are presently engaged in an oral-tradition experiment at Stanford under a grant from the Office of Education. The conservatives proposed no experiments, certainly no electronic ones, but smaller classes and more teachers, extra training for the teachers, and better texts; they were shunted aside. There are a good many other progressivistic, Rousseauistic, McLuhanite innovators in education now, churning out notions. We shall be hearing a lot from and about them. They accept, or agree with, McLuhan's view: "We are entering the new age of education that is programmed for discovery rather than instruction. . . . We would be foolish not to ease our transition from the fragmented visual world of the existing educational establishment by every possible means." This idea sounds fine, and it would be fine, if one could just ignore the complex of ideas which it is part of, and the narcosis which is their goal.

My contention is that McLuhan has become a double agent. He originally went out among tribalizing Media as a spy from civilization. (Spy is mine, but the tribal-civilization dichotomy is his, and useful.) But he stayed there too long; in Blake's words, which McLuhan tirelessly quotes: "We become what we behold." Now, in his last book and in his lectures since then, he continues to be an agent reporting back to civilized (literate, literary) people what the tribes are up to; but he also functions among us as an agent of the Media, proclaiming the destruction come and to come. To support this charge that he is a double agent, let me cite two statements he made before a meeting at the P.E.N. international conference in New York in June, 1966. Challenged by the critic John Simon with having deserted literature for advertising and TV, he said that, on the con-

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trary, he saw it as his mission to save literature from the media. He also said he did not believe a lot of the ideas he threw off; he was using them to "probe the environment." However, six months before, in the grand ballroom of the Waldorf, he addressed (for a star fee, I am told by a man who sells advertising and who was there) an assemblage of business and advertising executives. He did not tell them he was probing the environment or saving literature from the media. He told them pretty much what he had already said in *Understanding Media*. A sincere double agent: both sides are right. He often speaks, quite plausibly, of "point of view" as being a result of print and of how he is true to the electronic age because he writes mosaically. No fixed point of view? Why shouldn't one be working for both sides at once? The only reason I can think of why one shouldn't is neither mechanical nor electronic but moral, and though McLuhan refuses to fog himself up with moral concerns, he can't stop me from applying moral criteria to him. I am civilized and maybe I'm foggy, but I don't want either myself or my world to be retribalized. Tribalization may be inevitable, as McLuhan says, though I doubt it. But whether it is inevitable or not, and whether he is sincere or not, I do not like defectors. He is not an open enemy. He is not even an ally who sneakily opens the gates of the city to that enemy. He is an ally who sets about to persuade *me* to open the gates, using the arguments that our common enemy is stronger than we and bound to win, that we have terrible faults which succumbing to our enemy may cure if we handle him right (but *how?*), and besides the enemy can't help being barbarous, it's the environment he lives in, he's bringing this environment with him, it's irresistible and will get us, no matter what.

I wish I could confound him with erudition, but since that would require an extensive knowledge of history (both political and cultural), economics, sociology, philosophy, literature, psychology, and anthropology, to say nothing of a really exhaustive knowledge of the history and practice of technology, and since I have nowhere near the scholarship for the task, I am perforce content to write a short essay instead of a monograph and to cite one instance of an error in a subject I know well, the one standing for the many. McLuhan writes:

> In Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, which is almost completely devoted to both a psychic and social study of communication, Shakespeare states his awareness that true social and political navigation depend upon anticipating the consequences of innovation.

The statement in the which-clause and the one in the main clause are both untrue as they stand, and by the time they had been modified into truth they would be unrecognizable. (It is obvious that I think his famous message, "the medium is the message," is only a partial truth; in the language media, at any rate, the message too is part of the message.) Not only is his interpretation of *Troilus and Cressida* untrue, but the five lines he quotes in support of his interpretation do not in fact support it.

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> The providence that's in a watchful state
> Knows almost every grain of Plutus' gold,
> Finds bottom in the uncomprehensive deeps,
> Keeps place with thought, and almost like the gods
> Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.

Of course, like other thinkers, McLuhan could have quarried Shakespeare for ideas and expressions of attitudes to offer in evidence for his own thesis. Instead, he inserts, with monomaniacal intrusiveness, his own idea into this play, attributes the idea to Shakespeare, and claims that the whole play is about that idea. In this he is like a psychological nut who sees *Hamlet* as a study of the Oedipus complex or a linguistic nut who can't see the poetry for the morphemes. A few such extravagances in a book don't matter much, but *Understanding Media* offers an accumulation of errors — distortions, contradictions, projections, simplifications, limit-smashings — so considerable that finally one says, "No, I don't trust ideas which have this infirm a foundation." McLuhan-civilized used to offer evidence which supported his insights; but McLuhan-barbarian does not deign to answer critics who point out the errors which riddle his prophecies. The arrogance is the message.

I ALSO wish I could confound him rationally, by refuting his complex of ideas. But the complex is repetitive, "mosaic," hortatory, apocalyptic, as impervious to the discriminations of logic and common sense as to the corrections of scholarship. Worst of all, it is self-justifying. If you apply logic to it, he disposes of you by saying that you are a print-formed mind who has been made obsolete by Hume and electricity. If you say man is being changed all right but not so drastically or so fast as he maintains, he counters by telling you to wake up, you are still in the nightmare of print-induced unconsciousness, "consciousness will come as a relief," and he quotes *Finnegans Wake* at you (*he* understands it, *you* don't), saying that he takes his prophecies from the "radar feedback" of great art since great art constitutes a sort of "early warning system" for society. If you judge his ideas morally, he says he is not prescribing but describing. This statement may be valid intellectually but it is not valid emotionally, and it is certainly not true of McLuhan's own practice. In *Understanding Media,* he describes less than he prophesies, and what he admonishes us to do manages to be at once vague, capitulatory, and appalling.

The last sentence of the book is an opinion — a valuable opinion — expressed as a truth: "Panic about automation as a threat of uniformity on a world scale is the projection into the future of mechanical standardization and specialism, which are now past." But the sentence before this one betrays the Reader's Digesty sentiment that *really* we are all creative and mass leisure will release our creativity: "The social and educational patterns latent in automation are those of self-employment and artistic autonomy." Pardner, when you say that, laugh. He substitutes, and his rhetoric urges us to substitute, electricity for divine grace: ". . . since with electricity we extend our

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central nervous system globally, instantly interrelating every human experience. . . . We can now, by computer, deal with complex social needs with the same architectural certainty that we previously attempted in private housing." Finally, having put his trust in consciousness, he makes it clear, at the end of the chapter on "The Spoken Word," what the new, electronically expanded consciousness is good for.

> Electric technology does not need words any more than the digital computer needs numbers. Electricity points the way to an extension of the process of consciousness itself, on a world scale, and without any verbalization whatever. . . . Today computers hold out the promise of a means of instant translation of any code or language into any other code or language. The computer, in short, promises by technology a Pentecostal condition of universal understanding and unity. The next logical step would seem to be, not to translate, but to by-pass languages in favor of a general cosmic consciousness which might be very like the collective unconscious dreamt of by Bergson. The condition of "weightlessness," that biologists say promises a physical immortality, may be paralleled by the condition of speechlessness that could confer a perpetuity of collective harmony and peace.

Maybe this is one of those idea-clusters he doesn't really mean; maybe he is just probing the environment with it. Well, as part of the environment, let me respond: I don't like the idea (I don't like being probed with it either). The electronic heaven-on-earth of his vision is a world village of mute mindlessness, a parody of harmony and peace because the possibilities of disharmony and conflict have been lobotomized. He wants, and wants us to want, to turn most of the work of our minds over to the computers. I know — even with my foggy, unexpanded consciousness I know — that there are disadvantages to being human. But at least it's interesting, it's various. I'm for going on with it.

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# CURRENT READING

## The Limits of Efficiency

"A group of engineers were designing the communications system of a small fighter plane. They were told to keep the communication equipment as light as possible so as not to impair the plane's speed and maneuverability, or the load of fuel and ammunition it can carry. Every pound saved on communication hardware would improve the plane's performance. The different messages that the pilot may have to exchange with his gunner or with other planes or with the ground, and that provide for all the contingencies of navigation and fighting, are not numerous. No need for verbal messages, a telephone. A small set of dials and off-on signals would do.

"A psychologist was called in to study the available records of communications in actual combat, and to perform mock-combat tests. The group's final recommendation: restore the telephone. Men in mortal danger, or approaching or escaping it, need to hear and talk to other men, with plenty of redundancy, and not even always confining the talk to the task in hand. Without the relief of verbal, voiced exchange, tension might become intolerable, sometimes to the point of nervous breakdown, and would in any case lead to diminished performance during the same or next mission. . . ."

From, Jacob Marschak, "Economics of Languages," in *Behavioral Science Journal,* April 1965

## A Shortage of Strings

Discussion of public policy has focussed recently on all sorts of disparities in American life — air pollution, traffic safety, the decay of the central city, etc., etc., etc., etc. But one small poignant problem, it would seem, has been overlooked: the alarming shortage of string players. The following account is by Louis Krasner of the School of Music at Syracuse University, and is excerpted from a paper prepared for the year-long Seminar on The Great Society held during 1965-1966 at Syracuse.

"We are inclined sometimes to accept growing trends in a community or in the nation as natural and inevitable occurrences in a changing world. Actually, however, such trends may appear simply as a result of nothing more than a period of continued indifference and neglect in a specific area.

"A case in point is the present string player shortage which has alarmed musicians and educators everywhere. In spite of increasing community interest and support for local symphony orchestras throughout the country, our hopes for this cultural development may be undercut by the lack of qualified players for the string sections which make up the heart of a symphony orchestra. Moreover, serious difficulties confront the string teaching situation — composers familiar

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with performance problems are writing less for strings – and one hears talk of the natural decline of the String Instrument Era. Our young people find little incentive to undertake the difficult task of string instrument study. The teenagers and also, unfortunately, their school principals, see more glamour and amusement in their Band programs.

"Here, as also in many other instances, a commentary and an indicator measuring image and influence may be seen in the *Times* advertisement of August 22, 1965, which shows the well-dressed, successful and popular teenager in McGregor clothes sporting a trombone, guitar, clarinet or bass fiddle. On another page is a picture of a cute little five-year-old girl in pony-tail, standing against a background of red flowery wall paper in her ribboned, velvety party dress, lace stockings and shiny patent leather shoes, advertising Nanette originals and – holding a violin!

"The String Problem was analyzed and discussed by a distinguished group of musicians and educators at two Tanglewood String Symposia during the Summers of 1964 and 1965. A report titled *String Problems, Players and Paucity,* was published recently by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in cooperation with Syracuse University Press.

"To the predicament of the String Player in Symphony Orchestras and the string student in the schools must be added also the sorry situation concerning the care and usefulness of the String instruments themselves. Such instruments as there are in the public schools are generally in woefully poor playing condition because there are in our entire land not enough trained and qualified instrument repairers. Similar and even more astonishing is the situation of the young artist-performer – the extraordinary talent who finally succeeds in embarking on a concert career. He is faced with utter frustration and tortuous problems in attempting to search out a fine instrument for his concert performances.

"The cost of a fine old master violin for concert playing is almost prohibitive and the supply is not replenishable. Although our scientists have claimed that the art of the old master luthiers can be brought to life again, there exists in the United States not a single school for the training of a string instrument maker or repairer.

"Still more important, the art of violin making seems to have been lost. This need not be. Modern accoustical research could, I am assured, not only recapture the old skills of a Stradivarius or a Guarnerius. It could probably develop instruments of a far more refined and exquisite nature than the world has yet known. There are already accoustical engineers – some violinists among them – who are interested in such an undertaking. Indeed, a major article in the *Scientific American* was devoted to this subject a few years ago. But to get such research under way would have cost a few hundred thousand dollars –and in all our affluent society there was no private enterprise, foundation or government agency interested in initiating this venture!"

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## The State of the Unions

It is now a decade since the merger of the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. How have the unions fared? Not very well, according to a cautious assessment by Joel Seidman in the *Proceedings* of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association.

In membership, the trade union movement has declined. It reached a peak in 1956 when 17,490,000 members were enrolled. The number slipped to 16,303,000 in 1961, although in 1962, the most recent year for which the Bureau of Labor Statistics has published data, union membership increased to 16,586,000, due principally to the rise of union membership among Federal government employees. In proportion to the labor force, which had grown steadily in the decade, the slippage of union membership has been greater – from 24.5 percent in 1956 to 22.2 percent in 1962.

In collective bargaining, unions have been fairly effective, Seidman claims. Citing a study of Albert Rees, of wage advances in manufacturing, real wages (in 1957 dollars) rose from 95.9 cents an hour in 1933 to $2.24 in 1957, a rise of 234 percent, during a period when output per manhour in manufacturing rose by 187 percent. Though unions, by and large, may have done less well since then, the strong unions have been able to make gains, as witness last year's wage settlement in the auto industry in which wage costs rose 4.5 percent, as against the 3.2 productivity guide line figure put down by the Administration.

The crucial problem facing unions, of course, is their inability to organize white collar workers. Of a potential membership of 20,000,000 only 2,500,000 are union members, and most of these are largely in government service. The future seems to portend a long and slow decline of union strength. This is not news, but a confirmation of predictions made by *Fortune* magazine and others ten years ago. What is interesting, however, is that two favorable political administrations, from 1960 to 1966, have not been able to reverse fundamental technological and social trends which are eroding the basis of unionism in the U. S.

## Coitus, et al

If there is anything, but anything, you would like to know about world population problems and birth control, you will probably find it in *Family Planning and Population Programs*, edited by Bernard Berelson and others (University of Chicago Press). It is a huge, shapeless book of 61 chapters and 848 pages, but the data on any question, whether it be birth control problems in any country, evaluations of the rhythm method, oral contraceptives or intra-uterine contraceptive devices, or the success of demonstration and pilot projects in under-developed countries will be found here.

Most of the national studies are written by doctors from their own countries, and in some cases the writer begins with the "official

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line." Once past the opening paragraphs, however, some fascinating data show up. Thus, Dr. K.-H. Mehlan, Dean of the Medical Faculty of the University of Rostock, of the "German Democratic Republic," opens his essay with the bland remark: "In the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, all children are wanted children." He then goes on to provide data for each country. Thus: "In Romania, the ideal of responsible maternity is almost entirely implemented by legal abortion. . . . According to Zarnescu, 96% of the women did not know about and did not use contraception. Even the most primitive types of traditional methods were almost unknown. Contraception was used by only one-third of the educated women." And: "The legalization of abortion in Hungary was followed by a continuous increase in the number of legal abortions. . . . A total of 218,700 legal abortions were registered [in 1964], compared with about 132,000 births, *or 165 abortions per 100 births*. . . . In a study of problems of family planning, Acsadi and Klinger noted that, in 1964, 54% of the women had legal abortions because of contraceptive failures, and 46 percent did not use contraception systematically. Coitus interruptus was the most popular method of birth control, accounting for 52% of the practice, and the condom was second with 22%, the vaginal douche accounted for 8%, the rhythm method for 7%, chemical methods for 5%, diaphragms for 4%, and other methods for 2%." And, in the U.S.S.R.: "Abortion as a method of family planning was legalized . . . because no highly effective contraceptives, acceptable to all classes of the population were available. . . . Nearly 40% of the women who have had one or more abortions and have sexual intercourse regularly do not use any contraception . . . in spite of the official promotion of contraception, people know little about it and the refusal rate remains high."

The experiences of the Socialist countries are no different, in fact, from most others in the world with the exception of Western Europe and the United States. In Japan, whose birth rate has dropped sharply from a crude level of 33.5 in 1948 to 17 in 1957, the major factor has been legal abortion. In West Germany, about half the married couples use no form of contraception and illegal abortion is high.

In the United States, a sample survey in 1960 of married white women 18-39 years of age (representative of 18 million persons), disclosed that about one-tenth are sterile, principally as a result of treatment of a pathological condition; of the remainder, 81 percent had used contraception and an additional 6% expected to begin using it later. An earlier study, in 1955, showed that of married white families, 29% used condoms, 26% diaphragm, 24% rhythm, 11% douch, 6% withdrawal, 4% jelly alone, 7% miscellaneous. A growing number, in recent years, have begun to use oral pills and intra-uterine devices. The number of illegal abortions in the U. S. is unknown, though estimates range from 200,000 to 1,200,000 per year, as against (in the early 1960's) about 4,200,000 births each year.

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## Can We Feed the World?

In the under-developed areas of the world, the population in 1960 was estimated at 2,153,000,000 persons; and by the year 2000 it is likely that the total may be 4,699,000,000 persons. Food production has to rise by more than 200 percent simply to keep pace with this population growth.

A key problem, however, is not merely the amount of calories needed as a necessary feature of an adequate diet, but *the amount of protein* that is needed. In Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, the number of calories available per person is 2070, or 91 percent of requirement; but there are only 45 grams of protein, or 75 percent of requirement, per person. In North America, 3110 calories per person are consumed, or 120 percent of requirement; and 93 grams of protein, or 155 percent of requirement.

The question – and this is the theme of an essay by Professor William Sebrell Jr. of Columbia University, in the volume, *Technological Innovation and Society* (Columbia University Press) – is how to increase the supply of protein in the world, and how to get it to the people who need it.

Most Americans get protein from meat, but this is the most inefficient and costly way of raising it in large quantities. Grass yields 600 pounds of protein per acre, legumes (e.g. soy beans) yield 370 pounds, wheat 269 pounds, and beef 54 pounds of protein per acre. This is reflected in the relative cost of protein, as in the table below:

RELATIVE COST OF PROTEIN (in the U.S.)

| *Protein Sources* | *Cost per lb.* | *Percent Protein* | *Protein Cost per lb.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Soybean | 5¢ | 52 | 11¢ |
| Fishmeal | 10-12¢ | 75-85 | 14¢ |
| Skim milk | 14¢ | 35 | 40¢ |
| Chicken | 30¢ | 20 | $1.50 |
| Beef | 80¢ | 18 | $4.44 |

An increase in soybean cultivation would provide a major source of protein increase – but there is also added cost of fertilizer and production. The major potential source of protein is the sea. We are only beginning to chart the different areas of the ocean, some of which are as barren as desert, but some of which, because of currents and upswellings which bring up nutrients from the bottom, are extremely fertile.

Off Peru there is an area about 200 kilometers long and about 100 kilometers wide, where, as a result of a constant nutrient upswelling, the area teems with fish. In 1954, Peru caught about 50,000 tons of fish; in 1964, ten years later, the yield had increased to 9 million tons. (Paradoxically, Peru suffers from widespread protein-calorie malnutrition because 90 percent of the fish is exported.)

The simplest and cheapest way of using fish protein – to avoid

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freezing, canning, or scraping – is to grind up the whole fish as fish meal. It is bacteriologically safe, it is tasteless and odorless, and it can be used in bread or eaten in soup. "However," reports Dr. Sebrell, "the Food and Drug Administration will not permit the sale of such a product in the United States, giving as a reason that the American housewife would regard it as an unaesthetic and filthy product because it contains the intestines, the eyes and all other parts of the fish. We eat sardines, oysters and various other sea food whole; sometimes parts of an animal, such as the chitterlings, are eaten, and that does not seem to be unaesthetic. But at present federal regulations will not permit the sale of the whole fish product in this country. This is of some importance, because the impression is created that the product is inferior, not fit for use in the United States, and thus marketing it abroad becomes difficult."

One other, large untapped resource, as reported by N. W. Pirie in *Science,* for June 24, 1966, is "Leaf Protein as a Human Food." This protein, says Dr. Pirie, the head of the Biochemistry Department of the Rothamsted Experimental Station in Great Britain, is better nutritionally than most seed proteins and as good as many animal proteins. The technique of extraction is now known; what is needed is developmental research which would bring the cost down to where machines to pulp the leaves or extract the protein can be built and utilized cheaply. The reason why this is not being done, reports Dr. Pirie, is that "countries such as Britain and the United States, where the research could easily be done, are not at present in need of new sources of protein; countries that need protein, especially those in the wet tropics, have research services that are already overstrained; the people who are most in need of new sources of protein are impoverished, so commercial interests have no incentive to embark on necessary development research."

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